

**COLLAGEGRIDS: THINKING IT THROUGH
A PRACTICE-LED INVESTIGATION INTO ARTISTIC COGNITION**

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Abstract

This PhD by practice comprises a body of work accompanied by written critical commentary. A six part collage composition produced over a period of three years is the core of this project, dimensions 4900 x 1524 mm. The research project interrogates creative studio practice with the specific intention of articulating the artistic thinking of collage grids and to present this to a wider audience. Identified as mutually exclusive or conflicting discourses in the history of art, grids and collage exist in parallel, each having its own discourse, strategy and associations. This PhD project investigates the interplay between collage and grids in collage grids practice, interrogating the *through* of thinking through art, where the insights lie in *how* they function together, in the *how* rather than the *what* of art practice. The project methodology is hybrid, employing Active Documentation of the PhD iteration of collage grids to record the processes, theoretical, personal and practical involved in a 'complexity of overlap' of practice. It utilises contextual study with which to elucidate the mode of constructive composition at the crux of collage grids and to situate the practice and its conceptual framework in the wider field of knowledge. The project, *collage grids: thinking it through* argues for a materially anchored thinking process, a non-linear logic of association, where meaning lies in the links and connections made in resolving tensions that arise in the juxtaposition of difference. This argument is made by testing theories of cognition through the new domain of collage grids. By correlating existing research methods the project forms a new paradigm for artistic research, which recognises both empirical and embodied philosophies, and uses a connective model in the presentation of the exegesis. Finally it articulates a fundamentally constructive way of world-making, introducing to the linguistically based theory of metaphor, a materially anchored cognitive processing of artwork, which is a new contribution to thinking and telling the cognition of creative practice.

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List of artwork

The artwork comprises a collection of studies with a six panel composition and a compilation of journal images which features preliminary studies. (Dimensions w x h)

Studies for Composition

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Grids landscape</i> | 2012 pencil on paper 420 x 594 mm |
| <i>Cross-domain mapping poster</i> | 2012 collage on paper 835 x 660 mm |
| <i>Rain</i> | 2012 pencil on paper 420 x 594 mm |
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| <i>Cognitive landscape 15 September 2013 Viking Way</i> | 2013 pencil on paper 420 x 594 mm |
| <i>Cognitive landscape 8 October 2013 Viking Way</i> | 2013 pencil on paper 420 x 594 mm |
| <i>Cognitive landscape 16 October 2013 Viking Way</i> | 2013 pencil on paper 420 x 594 mm |

Book

collagegrids: thinking it through 2016, compilation of journal images together with preliminary studies that document the art practice, hard bound with dust cover, 186 pages, 200 x 250 mms

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Collagegrids 2014 2014 sextet of collage on canvas 4900 x 1524mm

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Introduction

The innovative impulse pushing for change is based on the imagination of a world different from what it is now.

Nowotny¹

We make no claim to change the mores of mankind, but we intend to show the fragility of thought, and on what shifting foundations, what caverns we have built our trembling houses

Aragon²

From the start, the concept driving this program has been that the visual arts must be considered a field of knowledge and that an artwork should be considered, first and foremost, a thinking process.

Vettese³

The creative work of the artist and academic research may seem unlikely companions, even contradictory. The artist works in an environment of apparent freedom and lack of boundaries, where seemingly anything goes, while the researcher appears hidebound by discipline and the imposed conventions of academia. Art invites unfinished thinking,⁴ whereas academic research seeks rigour in systematic and formalised knowledge.⁵ However, new ways of knowing are being explored in research which includes artistic modes of investigation,⁶ of thinking in, through and with art.⁷ This project is just such an investigation.

¹ Helga Nowotny, Foreword, *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. by Biggs and Karlsson, (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2010) p. xvii. I prefer the term *generating* to Nowotny's *pushing for*.

² Louis Aragon, "Declaration of the Bureau de Recherches Surrealistes." In *Art in Theory 1900 - 1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles and Paul Wood, (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1925), p. 439.

³ Angela Vettese, "Foreword: How Do We Teach Art." In *Art as a Thinking Process: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*, ed. by Mara Ambrozic and Angela Vettese, (Sternberg Press, 2013) p. 8.

⁴ Henk Borgdorff, "The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research" in Biggs and Karlsson, p. 44.

⁵ Michael Biggs and Daniela Büchler, "Rigor and Practice-based Research" *Design Issues*, 23: 3, (2007) p. 62-69, Literature Online.

⁶ Michael Schwab, ed. *Experimental Systems, Future Knowledge in Artistic Research*. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013) p.5, introduction.

Situated in the unstable position between the liminal, subversive and excessive and the higher ideals of civilized culture, art aims to mobilise, to sustain movement within conflict. It appears contrary to theory, which, following Wilde, aims at something totally comprehensible, re-presentational, closed and answered.⁸

Contrasting with Karl Popper's description of science as the purely 'falsifiable'⁹ distinguishing between science and 'non-science', more recent research has shown that the roles of artist and scientist are mutually reinforcing with activities that complement each other, and which lead to a more diverse and richer understanding.¹⁰ Recent developments in linguistics¹¹ and neuroscience¹² point to an increasingly embodied understanding of human cognition,¹³ a fundamentally constructive activity of making sense. The question here is what light can the study of the activity of art practice shed on this sense-making process, of focussing not on what, but rather on how we think.

Research is inextricably linked with learning and sharing knowledge with conversation. This doctoral project draws on thirty years of professional experience in art and design education and practice; teaching, programme design and leadership at secondary, further and higher level and art practice which include many discussions with influential artists, architects and thinkers.

The process of bringing together materials with ideas, of modifying, reviewing and revising, of juxtaposition and overlay, of moving stuff around the table or wall, in increasing

⁷ Borgdorff 2010, p. 44.

⁸ Carolyn Wilde, "Theory in the Education of the Fine Artist." *Journal of Art and Design Education*, 18: 1 (1999), p. 52.

⁹ Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, First published 1935, (Oxford and New York: Routledge 2002)

¹⁰ Joseph R. Hollingsworth, "High Cognitive Complexity and the making of Scientific Discoveries" in *Knowledge, Communication and Creativity*, ed. by Marcel Fournier and Arnaud Sales, (London and Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2007) p. 145. And Sian Ede, *Art and Science*. (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 'that artistic insights are as important on both their own terms as those in science and that we can and should accommodate both forms of knowledge' (back cover).

¹¹ ICLC-13 The 13th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference, (online) <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/events/2015/07/iclc-13-the-13th-international-cognitive-linguistics-conference/iclc-13-book-of-abstracts/> (accessed 6 August 2016)

¹² Kiverstein, J. and Miller, M. "The embodied brain: towards a radical embodied cognitive neuroscience." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, (2015), and Thomas Fuchs, "Embodied cognitive neuroscience and its consequences for psychiatry." *Poiesis and Praxis* 6:3, 219-233, (2009) pp. 219-233 (online) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285872675_2009_Embodied_cognitive_neuroscience_and_its_consequences_for_psychiatry_Poiesis_Prax_published_online_Jan_23_2009 (accessed 6 August 2016),

¹³ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

complexity, has permeated discussion with students and colleagues alike.¹⁴ Visits to galleries, museums, artists' studios and lectures provide opportunities for sharing ideas. Conversations with artists, architects and thinkers comprise a collection of informal exchanges contributing to the under-defined trajectory of concerns and issues which constitute practice. Most significant of these exchanges include conversations with artist/designers Antony Hollaway, Bruce Archer, Bridget Riley, Peter Moss and John Horwill, the architects Harry Fairhurst and Christopher Eisner, composer Bernard Hughes, and sociologist Margaret Archer.¹⁵

The research project asserts: artwork, or work that is art, is primarily a materially anchored¹⁶ thinking process, one that is fundamentally open and inclusive, that thought and thinking are not processes solely contained, prescribed or formulated in words, in a verbal process, but is also a material process, contained, prescribed and formulated through art practice. It also addresses the troublesome issue of how to present thought when its origination comes through visual and/or the practice of art.¹⁷

On practice-led research

In her historical essay, Caroline Wilde traces the introduction of theory into art practice to Leon Battista Alberti, whose *Treatise on Painting* of 1430's requires for the artist intellectual learning, the hierarchical concept of subject matter and the introduction of perspective, which are brought together with mathematics and science into a greater metaphysical project. Alberti places the emerging techniques of art on new intellectual foundations, and develops an understanding for art that, (in addition to the possibilities for art of transforming our experience and understanding of great humanistic themes) has its own 'distinctive determinations over and above its representative content'. Wilde identifies these distinctive determinations as an 'acute sensitivity to the multifarious ways in which representations yield different levels of meaning'. She writes that in the making of the work, just as in its reading and reception, is the centrality of this sensitivity to the open, fluid interplay of materials with ideas, of artwork with meaning that is at the crux of art.

¹⁴ On the collage grids project, Peter Moss acknowledged, 'I have taught with you. This is what you teach'. Unpublished conversation 5 January 2017.

¹⁵ See Appendix. For the conversation with Margaret Archer see Discussion 'Towards a Theory of Practice'.

¹⁶ Edwin Hutchins, "Material Anchors for Conceptual Blends." *Journal of Pragmatics* Vol 37, (2005) 1555-1577. Literature online.

¹⁷ Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, eds. *Thinking Through Art* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.

Wilde contends that not only is what theorists in art history, philosophy and cultural sociology seek different to that which the artist is looking for, but that these disputes actually hinder the development of sensitivity to this open, fluid interplay. Wilde argues, 'it is not the closure of meaning that theorists of art should establish ...but an investigation into how and what meaning and ideas can be constructed and assembled through what material'. Following Wilde, we need to 'learn what intellectual talk better informs the practical sensibilities' and, equipped with what the writing has imparted, the writing should return one, artist or audience, to the work, where the final understanding/meaning is articulated.¹⁸

Recent writing on practice-led research explores questions of theory and practice, the place of art history and contextual studies, methodology and method, the role of writing, of artefact and exhibition, and questions about the contribution to knowledge properly expected as research outcome.¹⁹ Many of these issues, not least of all methodology, remain in a state of flux.²⁰ Reviewing this material ²¹ shows research written from the perspective of historian or critic, utilising methodologies imported from other disciplines, with a tendency to employ dense theoretical language seemingly quite unrelated to the more immediate practicalities of studio making. Candlin suggests that instead of trying to make art practices fit traditional academic form

It would be more productive to use the practice-based PhDs as a way of re-thinking academic conventions and scholarly requirements....rather than to unquestioningly try to squeeze art practice into the regulatory forms of academia.²²

My research seeks a way to talk about art and artwork that is contextualised but not defined by history, informed but not directed by other disciplines.²³ I look to find a way to theorise practice in terms of practice 'in the movement of making', from the insider perspective of artist. As my research project has progressed, I notice that in the written element of the study, my attention is diverted from practical concerns to exploring critical and historical issues in contextual study. Although properly integral to the project, this

¹⁸ Wilde, 1999, p. 52, 53.

¹⁹ Recent publications include Borgdorff 2012 and Schwab 2013.

²⁰ A symposium exploring aspects of doctoral research in Fine Art practice and Fine Art pedagogy organised by NFAE in collaboration with the University of Cumbria. The University of Cumbria Institute of the Arts, Friday, 15 July 2016

²¹ Art and Design Index to Theses, now EThOS, (online) www.ethos.co.uk/

²² Fiona Candlin, 2000 "Practice Based Doctorates and Questions of Academic Legitimacy." *Journal of Art and Design Education* 19:1, (2000), p. 96-101.

²³ Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2008 Subject *Benchmark Statement for Art and Design* 238 03/08 (London: QAA, 2008).

appears at odds with my studio journaling. This doctoral submission hopefully integrates these fundamentally different elements of research, and approaches writing with clarity and purpose.

The role of writing in practice-led research

Amongst the concerns of artistic research, questions of theory and practice, of art history and contextual studies, methodology and method, questions about the contribution to knowledge properly expected as research outcome, is the place and role of writing, and of the material artefact.

This subject is explored in *The Functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions*²⁴, where Macleod reviews how the written text functions in relation to the concept of thesis. For this she identifies three types of higher degree practice research,

- type A defined as positioning a practice
- type B defined as theorising a practice
- type C an in-progress definition of revealing a practice

Type A research is where the practioner's intention is to position the practice and concerns historical, cultural or contemporay, or a combination of all three. The written text contains comprehensive evidence and information relevant to the exact positioning of the practice, providing a context which allows for an appropriate and informed reading of the works.

Type B research theorises practice, where the practioner, often in the category of artist/teacher/researcher, uses research methodology which exposes on-going practice to a theoretical framing and theory driven investigation. Although the starting point may be the adoption and elucidation of theories, the central purpose of the research is to demonstrate the theory of a particular type of practice. Here the written text sets out the theoretical groundwork with accompanying evidence of practice which demonstrates the research proposition. Type C research, the revealing of a practice, can be predicated on the seesaw effect of working on the written text and on the art project. In this instance the written text is instrumental to the conception of the project, but, in the duration of making, what had been written initially had to be extensively reviewed as the process of making had altered what had been defined in the written form. For type C, Macleod shows that the project is

²⁴ Katy Macleod, "The Functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions." *Working Papers in Art and Design*, Vol 1, (2000), Literature online.

not bound to the text, (meaning theory) in the same way as types A or B. This is because type C research aims to understand what has been realised through the art, to find, after the making, as this researcher put it, logics which match up.

Macleod questions the relationship of text to thesis, and asks whether text is the thesis, as, in all examples provided for her enquiry, the thesis is provided by the written text or texts and the artwork. Macleod is at pains to point out that in none of the examples is the thesis formulated in the text then illustrated in the artwork. Expanding on this she writes, 'In type A the written text is highly instrumental and provides for a specific reading of the artwork submission; in type B the written text is inseparable from the theoretical framing of the submission, in type C it is instrumental and complementary to the artwork submission but the artwork here is the thesis; it provides the theoretical proposition'. She goes on to ask 'What, therefore, is the thesis, or, rather, what constitutes the thesis?'²⁵. In 'Theory/Practice: a relationship in the making' Macleod and Holdridge cite historical precedent provided by Herwitz, pointing to theoretically charged Surrealist practices, and asserting that art is a theorising practice: it can produce the research thesis: it cannot be said to be simply an illustration of it.²⁶

Suggested models for structuring this written component are based on the ordering of the traditional 'thesis'. Clarified by Timothy Evelyn Jones, this includes,

- A review or scoping of knowledge current within the field of inquiry, to confirm that the research has not been undertaken before. 'We need to develop a consensus of the kind of review that is most appropriate to our subject.'
- Research methods, the ways of doing research and the study of methods, or methodology. While there is a great deal of literature on quantitative and qualitative research methods in the humanities and sciences, there is little consensus in art.
- The inquiry, the core of the programme, to identify in what ways art and design do generate knowledge through inquiry, where 'we need to be more explicit by what is meant by an inquiring mind in our subject at University level.'

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, "Theory/Practice...a relationship in the making", *European Journal of Arts Education*, 3: 2 and 3, (2001).

- Recording the process, this is a standard element in Research, the PhD journal facilitates discussion between researcher and supervisor, a point of reference for reviewing progress, and reflecting on future development. 'The challenge is to make academic rigour explicit within our research in ways that have not always been the case'.
- And finally, the conclusion which summarises the argument, and identifies what has been achieved.²⁷

This model presents a linear process following an inherited 'external' logic, one that does not acknowledge the primacy of practice or its premise in determining the research findings of the project. This linear format is also followed by Gray and Malins²⁸ and Barrett and Bolt.²⁹

A similar model is 'A connective model for the practice-led research exegesis; an analysis of content and structure'³⁰ where Hamilton and Jaaniste discuss two alternative models of the practice-led research exegesis. The first a contextual model, does not discuss the researchers own creative practice but provides a parallel text which offers useful insights into the broader field of the practice. This is similar to Macleod's Type A. The second is the commentary model, which is internally oriented and introspective, and used by accounts which acknowledge the phenomenological approach, and is in this way similar to Macleod's Type B. The seesaw effect of Type C can be detected in the connective model, which combines the contextual and commentary model.

In terms of orientation, the context and commentary models are clearly dichotomous; the context model orients the researcher to look out at what precedes, contextualises or frames the practice, while the commentary model orients the researcher to look inwards and to assume the perspective of an internally situated intimate relationship with the practice. In the connective exegesis, the researcher adopts a dual orientation – looking inwards and outwards.³¹

²⁷ Timothy Evelyn Jones, "A method of search for reality: research and research degrees in art and design." In *Thinking through Art*, ed. by Macleod and Holdridge, 226-240, (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 233-234.

²⁸ Carole Gray and Julian Malins, *Visualising Research: A Guide to the Research Process* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), p. 166.

²⁹ Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, eds. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (London and New York: Tauris, 2007), pp.162-163, and 197-198

³⁰ Jillian Hamilton and Luke Jaaniste, "A connective model for the practice-led research exegesis: An analysis of content and structure." *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*, 3: 1, (2010), pp. 31-44.

³¹ Hamilton and Jaaniste, 2010, p.39.

However, the seesaw effect, the back and forth of revision and redrafting is a result of the emergent nature of artistic research, in the connective model, the back and forth is one of perspective, and of marrying the relative positions. The observed pattern of the research also follows the inherited form which presents the work and ideas of others in primary position.

- Introduction
- First main section: SITUATING CONCEPTS
- Second main section: PRECEDENTS OF PRACTICE
- Third main section: RESEARCHERS CREATIVE PRACTICE
- Conclusion³²

While the first and second section takes the ‘outsider’ perspective, the third adopts an ‘insider’ approach, in this way connecting one with the other. In the authors’ words ‘Instead of denying one of these orientations (as the context and commentary models do), the researcher embraces and integrates them. The connective model therefore poses the challenge of how to combine two differently oriented perspectives or points of view’.³³ What is at risk, Hamilton and Jaaniste point out, that if the differing orientations, styles and voices are relegated to separate sections the research might appear juxtapositional, kaleidoscopic and fractured, rather than a unified and coherent whole.³⁴ It is this connective model that I modify to accommodate the practice-led nature of my research.

The through of thinking through art

‘Thinking through art’ is a term editors Katy Macleod and Lyn Holdridge borrow from Christopher Frayling’s categorisation of research in art – research into, through and for art.³⁵ *Thinking through Art* ultimately arises from trying to get inside the processes of

³² Hamilton and Jaaniste, 2010, p. 34.

³³ Hamilton and Jaaniste, p. 39.

³⁴ Hamilton and Jaaniste, p. 40.

³⁵ Christopher Frayling, "Research in Art and Design." *Royal College of Art Research Papers* 1:1, 1-5 (Royal College of Art Research Papers, 1993/4), p. 2. And who in turn developed this from Herbert Read.

artwork, in order to 'refine our understanding of art as thought.'³⁶ They propose art as theoretical practice, where

'Theory' ...would be less something a critic or historian brings to the work...than something to be traced in it, and writing would belong to such work as a part of its unfolding, a continuation of the conditions of its appearing.³⁷

This approach suggests theoretical investigation of practice aiming to detect the thinking internal to practice, assuming, perhaps, that thinking internal to art is readily translatable and linguistically accessible.

In two key chapters in *Thinking through Art* Kenneth Hay and Timothy Emlyn Jones focus on the thought process at the heart of art. The first, Hay introduces the ideas of Italian philosopher Galvano Della Volpe³⁸ ideas that rework the materialist logic of Karl Marx, in particular the C – A – C circle. Shared with science, it is a process

which starts with the analysis of the concrete, material world (C) from which analysis abstractions are formed through which to theorise the world (A); which abstractions, being concrete, in turn go back into and 'interfere' with the concrete world once more (C), setting off a new process of conceptualisation.³⁹

The movement of thought that Hay introduces to art moves from abstract to concrete, 'is not an identical return, but altered and enriched by the journey.'⁴⁰ Angela Vettese writes, 'what seems to hold true is a continuous movement from practice to thinking and back again.'⁴¹ Following Della Volpe, Hay argues that while art practice can be aligned with scientific practice, it remains cognitively, semantically and methodologically distinct, contributing to knowledge in different ways. While insightful, Hay argues for the process theoretically, he does not trace it through practice.

³⁶ Katy Macleod and Lyn Holdridge, *Thinking Through Art* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

³⁷ Stephen Melville, 2001 in *Thinking Through Art*, ed. by Macleod and Holdridge, (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

³⁸ Kenneth Hay, "Concrete Abstractions and intersemiotic translations: the legacy of Della Volpa." In *Thinking through Art: reflections on art as research*, by K. and Holdridge, L. Macleod, 51-59. (Oxford and New York: Routledge).

³⁹ Kenneth Hay, "Concrete Abstractions - a Della Volpean perspective on studio practice as research." *Journal of Visual Arts Practice Vol 2 issue 1/2*, 2002, p. 64.

⁴⁰ Hay, 2002, p. 65. This would suggest a spiral movement of thought rather than circular, following a path of learning promoted by Jerome Bruner in *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1960)

⁴¹ Angela Vettese "Foreword: How Do We Teach Art." In *Art as a Thinking Process: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*, ed. by Mara Ambrožič and Angela Vettese, 8-17. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), p. 11.

Addressing the place of knowledge in practice when it is conceived of as distinct from that in theory, Timothy Emlyn Jones refers to Schön's 'knowledge – on – reflection' and 'knowledge – in – action, the latter which supposes practical activity is itself intrinsically intelligent. He writes of Schön as going some way to theorising intuition, in what he calls 'the dialogue with the situation' that is crucial to the generation of new knowledge obtained through practice. He writes that this is what makes practice creative practice and what distinguishes 'knowledge building' from 'knowledge use'.⁴² Jones associates art research with the exploration and understanding of human consciousness and the 'intelligence of doing'. He writes that we should be explicit about how knowledge may be generated and embodied within the practical dimension of artistic production,

There is a need for more theory about practice coming out of what artists and designers actually do methodologically. We need to know how we think through art.'⁴³

It is the conception of artistic research reaching beyond the confines of the discipline, and to this call for knowledge that this project responds.

In her introduction, Vettese writes,

From the start, the concept driving this programme has been that the visual arts should be considered a field of knowledge and that an artwork should, first and foremost, be considered a thinking process.⁴⁴

To consider artwork a thinking process, in effect, moves the term artwork from noun to verb, thus making the art thinking process the object of research of which the artwork/artefact is an inseparable part. Vettese calls for a reappraisal of what she identifies as 'the overwhelming attention paid to the readymade and to the dematerialisation of the work of art' arguing that even the conceptual artists never gave up making and controlling the objects they were showing as art. She calls art 'a slippery entity that aims to upend anyone who tries to pigeonhole it into a taxonomy or inflexible category', and that by asserting that artwork is a thinking process, 'we are also questioning the meaning and widening the means of the word 'thinking'. Or even widening what we understand by thinking process.

⁴² Jones, 2006, p. 227.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 228.

⁴⁴ Vettese, 2013, p. 8.

This project aims at getting inside the processes of artwork, inside the thinking process, the dialogue with the situation, to question 'but how does this work?' what is the *through*, of thinking and art, of idea and material? This project interrogates the *through* of thinking through art, the *how* of 'what is taken as read' or 'what goes without saying', of practice.

Jeremiah Day proposes that artistic research could be 'the formalization and concretization of what already exists, but which is under-defined.'⁴⁵ He observes

After all, 'artistic research' must refer to a method, not to a subject ... What is needed is a bottom-up interrogation, not a top down, to preserve the place of 'becoming' before being informed by contextual study... that is to focus on the making process as primary.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Jeremiah Day, "Digging." In *Art as a thinking Process: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*, ed. by Ambrožič and Vettese, 62-67 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), p. 64.

⁴⁶ Day, 2013, p. 65.

The primacy of practice

Artistic research seeks *in and through* the production of art to contribute not just to the artistic universe, but to what we 'know' and 'understand'... In a material sense, then the research impacts on the development of art practice, and in a cognitive sense on our understanding of what that art practice is.

Borgdorff ⁴⁷

No longer defined by their materials, the term practice was adopted by artists in the 1980s to mean that which they do in a work context. Covering a multidisciplinary approach, it implied a certain conduct and an attitude of seriousness towards the activity, one with significance, carrying some weight.⁴⁸ In practice led research, practice is the premise, the given, specified and stated. It is the starting point from which all else follows. This project investigates the activity of art practice in practice-led artistic research.

This...does not follow the academic conception of 'theory and practice'. It reverses this order and places practices before theory, which, after all, is the conclusion of practice.⁴⁹

Following Alber's observation, rather than conceived of as prior, where theory is *put into practice*, in this artistic research theory is the *finding* of practice. Practice led study is framed by practical rather than theoretical concerns. What is clear from common understanding is that theory and practice are generally considered separate entities, as often as not, set up in conflict with one another, each yielding different outcomes and understandings of the way the world is.

In practice-led artistic research the artist is the researcher. This sets the researcher in unique relationship with the practice, positioning them inside the process and central in the activity of art practice, inside the movement of making. However, this research is careful to note that here the artist/researcher 'self' is not the focus of study. Inescapably

⁴⁷ Borgdorff, 2012, p. 54.

⁴⁸ Chris Rust, Judith Mottram, Jeremy Till, "Review of practice-led research in art, design and architecture." (*Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive*, 2007), Literature Online.

⁴⁹ Josef Albers, *The Interaction of Colour*. (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1963), p. 1.

interconnected, the project sidesteps auto – ethnography.⁵⁰ Instead, it pays primary attention to the *how* of the making and the sense-making process, rather than the *what* of personal concerns.⁵¹

Method

There are circumstances where the best or only way to shed light on a proposition, a principle, a material, a process or a function is to attempt to construct something, or to enact something, calculated to explore, embody or test it.⁵²

Positioned from perspective of ‘insider’, my project sets out to investigate the activity of art practice through practice led artistic research. To do this it uses the active documentation method of Nancy de Freitas, a method which engages the artist in a critical manner with the relationship between conceptual, theoretical and practical concerns.⁵³ Active documentation provides the means for the integration of the theoretical, personal and practical, or ‘complexity of overlap’ often experienced as problematic in art research. Freitas describes active documentation as a hybrid tool, which can be used to,

- a. Identify the evolution of a working process
- b. Capture accidental progress and problematic blocks
- c. Articulate phases of work that become invisible with progress
- d. Provide the detached record necessary for the abstraction of research issues
- e. Play a role in ‘theory construction’ relating to art research.⁵⁴

De Freitas also identifies the role of reflective practice and indicates how research issues are abstracted through critical reflection and the examination of the documented experience against initial intentions and existing knowledge. Not without its critics, where documentation is felt to interrupt and change the relationship between artist and the

⁵⁰ Morwena Griffiths, "Research and the Self" in *The Routledge Companion to the Arts*, ed. by Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson, 167 - 185 (Oxford; UK and New York: USA: Routledge, 2010), p. 185.

⁵¹ I return to this when addressing the personal concerns and projects of human agency.

⁵² Bruce Archer in Rust, Mottram and Till, 2007, p. 10.

⁵³ Nancy de Freitas "Towards a definition of studio documentation: working tool and transparent method." *Working papers in Art and Design*, 2, 1-11, (2002), p. 5.

⁵⁴ Freitas, 2002, p.6.

work⁵⁵, the process of documentation also becomes a creative work in itself, producing texts and images as artwork themselves.⁵⁶ This form of documentation is responsive to changes in environment and is without predetermined conclusions. It focusses attention not on the object that has been made but on the activity of making, where the finished pictures *exhibit the process of its making*.⁵⁷ It is exciting in that, in addition to the evidence of the process which provides insight into the artist's workings, it appears that this in turn can lead the viewer into the process.⁵⁸

A connective model for the practice-led exegesis for collagegrids

To maintain the primacy of practice in practice-led research is to assert the Researchers Creative Practice as prior, providing the premise for research. Taking practice as the given, the research project documents and articulates the complexity of overlap of personal, theoretical and practical issues and concerns, the thinking that can be traced in and that arises from practice. Identified in the commentary, which 'talks us through' the process, the issues and concerns of practice are then discussed in relation to the wider field, in the broader context of the work and writing of others, which at the same time connects with and confirms the practice, while being framed by the practice, and against which the findings of research can be acknowledged.

What is at stake with moulding the research into a homogenous whole is the very detail of its heterogeneity, to make research homogeneous would be to iron out any possibility for further connections and thus result in something representational closed and answered. The job of the exegesis is to provide the necessary tools for accessing and understanding what the researcher conceives the artwork to be. Read as a whole, each of the project's constituent parts interrelates with the others, it becomes linear through language, moving from the practical to theoretical, it is aligned to the personal throughout.

Volume One and accompanying commentary articulates the private, inner conversation of collagegrids constructive process, while contextual discussion engages with public discourse on collage and on grids, summarising the relation between them constructed by

⁵⁵ Jeffery Potter, *To a Violent Grave: An oral Biography of Jackson Pollock*, 2nd Edition (Pushcart Press, 1987).

⁵⁶ Rebecca Fortnum and Chris Smith, "The Problem of Documenting Fine Art Practices and Processes." *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 6:3, (2007) 167-174.

⁵⁷ Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandell, *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 27.

⁵⁸ Kerstin Mey, "Did Hans Namuth kill Jackson Pollock? The problem of documenting the creative process", paper abstract, (2007), Literature Online.

collagegrids. This discussion attempts to construct a theory of practice which accommodates both in a collagegrids construction.

The exegesis I propose uses several tools, those of comprehending, analysing and comparison, but the content areas follow the practice-led nature of the study. First, it introduces the practice-led research project and methods. Secondly, it presents the practice by artwork and its documentation and provides a commentary which articulates the issues and concerns of practice. Third, it contextualises the issues and concerns arising from practice with reference to other artists, art history, philosophy and theory and discusses the practice in terms of existing frameworks. Finally, it discusses its significance in the wider field. The connective model is ordered as follows,

- INTRODUCTION: Opening Comments
 - Practice-led research and method
- COMMENTARY:
 - Researchers creative practice
- DISCUSSION:
 - On collage, on grids: concepts and contexts
 - a theory of practice
 - Thinking it through
 - other frameworks
- CONCLUSION: Closing Comments
 - Originality and Contribution

This practice-led model for written exegesis acknowledges the primacy of practice, the premise and object of research. It is not an introspective or phenomenological study of subjective experience, but rather it approaches practice from a position of insider, inside the practice. The research project and method are introduced. The practice is presented with commentary, and is contextualised and discussed in a wider field where its significance is established. In this way, the role of writing is not to legitimise practice, but to open up and share its findings with a wider audience, which after all is the purpose of research.

Outline

Volume One presents documentation of practice comprising a series of images of pages selected from five journals punctuated with photographs of the studio showing the different states of the emerging composition together with preliminary studies. In photographs and handwritten notes the journals record a complex overlap of personal, theoretical and practical issues and concerns arising in practice, which include references to the work of others which occurs during the process, part of the tacit and inherited knowledge of practice.

Volume Two contains the written critical exegesis. Premised on the primacy of practice, that art is a field of knowledge and that artwork is considered first and foremost a thinking process, the *Introduction* sets out the collage grids research project. It establishes the field of practice-led artistic research, the project's methodology of active documentation, and the mode of connective exegesis for its presentation and elucidation.

The *Commentary*, talks through *Volume One*. From an insider perspective, it articulates the complexity of the overlap of personal, theoretical and practical concerns, the irreducibly complicated process and contingent immediacy of decision-making inherent in practice. *Commentary* findings show collage grids is contingent, composite and inclusive, open to that which is aligned with personal concerns and projects. Arising from juxtaposition, thinking is non-linear. It is partial and fragmentary, open to a form of synesthetic interplay of non-verbal, pre-verbal and premonitory, where thinking draws on inner physiological contingencies of sensing and feeling, resulting in a premonitory and emergent composition. This thinking is primarily associative and generative, not deductive, inductive or reductive. Not imposed or pre-supposed, the new composition emerges from the interplay of materials with ideas through a reflexive and cumulative decision making process. It is a materially anchored thinking process; it utilises a non-linear logic of association, where meaning lies in the links and connections made resolving tensions that arise in the juxtaposition of difference. The *Commentary* articulates the thinking – making exchange that accommodates the planned, ordered and structured with that which is chance, chaotic and contingent; the linear and the non-linear. It presents theory, reference to the work and ideas of others, as embedded in and modified by practice, and acknowledges the necessity of human agency, indispensable in the decision making process; the linguistic and non-linguistic. It articulates the complicated thinking – making exchange, the interplay of

material and idea, in a generative, emergent and unfinished mode of constructive composition.

Adopting an outsider perspective, *Discussion* draws on contextual study to elucidate the constructive composition at the crux of collage grids, situating its conceptual framework in the wider field. It provides a parallel text which offers insights into a broader field of practice. Although organised sequentially, the four discussions are conceived of as parallel, leading to simultaneous reasoning, drawing accumulative rather than deductive conclusions. The project is intended to be understood as a whole.

The first discussion draws on study of 20th and 21st history, critical theory and philosophy to explore the fields of collage and grids. Presented as mutually exclusive or conflicting discourses in the history of art, grids and collage exist in parallel, each having its own discourse, strategy and association. Discussion on collage raises issues of its challenge to both traditional painting and philosophical notions of representation and truth. Accumulative, fragmentary, and heterogeneous, collage is a transdisciplinary process, where abrupt juxtapositions of fragments, of images and words, removed from familiar contexts gives rise to unexpected new meanings. The double status of collage arising from juxtaposition results in polyvalence and the simultaneity of multiple readings and meaning, that collapses past and present, time and place while constructing new heterogeneous space that is complex and complicated, promoting buffering zones of intersection, osmosis and exchange. It does not reproduce or reflect but brings together in a conscious act of construction, polyvalence of different ideas and concepts, through choice, modification and distribution of materials. Acted out in a specific time and place with contingent material, the artist and viewer are live agents of construction, and while not innately subversive, collage brings about change by constructing the new. Unlike traditional painting and philosophy, collage is not premised on correspondence of the similar but on the juxtaposition of difference by logic of association.

Whereas collage is understood both as noun and verb, object and activity, the grid or grids are presented as structure or structures, as already formed. The 'look of thought'⁵⁹ that they 'represent', is always prior, with logic arrived at through reductive abstraction of the field into parallel lines and the mapped coordinates of their intersection. As compositional devices they provide systems of order and ordering; inherited, grids offer stability,

⁵⁹ Also the title of Donald Kuspit's article "Sol LeWitt: The Look of Thought." *Art in America*, September, 1975: 42-49.

regularity, conformity and accountability. Grids identify and map a field; they make sense and meaning by constructing relationships, linking and connecting, through the coordinating features of alignment.

Historiography of art history shows its methodologies and analysis premised on prevailing theories of how the world is. These 'divining rods of meaning',⁶⁰ tools of artistic analysis have as their focus the art object, and produce outsider oriented analysis. When focussed on process rather than artefact, analysis brings forth different results. Examples provided in *Discussion 1* show artists' engagement with materials, and the decision – making of material handling, which evidences thinking through practice. This calls for a theory of practice that focusses primarily on process, that accommodates an insider approach to practice.

Reflecting on a lack of theory of practice, the second discussion correlates existing writing and addresses the *through* of thinking through art. *Towards a theory of practice* seeks a way of understanding and theorising collage/grids premised on the primacy of practice, where the practice is the object of study and not its social systems or the phenomenological self. Recognising the limited role accorded the artist by modernism, post-modernism and much of the contemporaneous in art, it is necessary to identify the role of 'the hidden hand'⁶¹ of practice, that of activator and decision – maker. This discussion constructs a theory of practice which places human agency at its centre, the active mediator of the *through* of practice. Recognising aspects that are not defined by the socially structured situation, that which is personal and individual to practice, it reconceives that which is inner and private as internal conversation, rather than in terms of sight and observation. Shifting the metaphor for knowing and knowledge from a passive 'looking in' to one of active participation, admits contingent immediacy and the non – discursive to theorising and theory, where change comes about through the active reflexive deliberation of practice rather than the random side effects of causal events. Themes of collage and grids can be traced in this discussion of structure and agency, where grids assume the fixed structure of the inherited found, the coordinating features of alignment, and collage, the contingent, composite and inclusive re-ordering, making newly possible intervention and

⁶⁰ The term 'divining rods of meaning' is from Westview Press review of the second edition of Laurie Schneider Adams, *Methodologies of Art: An Introduction*, 2009, (online) <https://westviewpress.com/books/the-methodologies-of-art/> (accessed 5 September 2016).

⁶¹ The term refers to M. Res. finding, by Cilla Chapman, *Collage: Politics and Aesthetics*. (Unpublished M.Res. available from Lincoln University, 2009).

change, which, crucially, is mediated by the conversation of human agency. It is at this crux, the interplay of grids and collage, that the *through* of my collagegrids practice is insistent and investigates.

Discussion three, *thinking it through*, explores the courses of action produced by the deliberations of collagegrids, and investigates the reflexivity of interplay between materials and thinking of collage and grids, that generates emergent relations of entities, though juxtaposition and alignment.

The fourth discussion explores and tests theories of cognition, introducing the materially anchored cognitive process of collagegrids to the linguistically based field of metaphor studies, a process which constructs simultaneously in the material concrete and conceptual domains. In addition to modifying the domains of conceptual blending and emergent structure, this discussion places human agency as pivotal, adding non-linear overlap and non-discursive, tacit practices to the construction of new and emergent domains of knowledge.

The project challenges inherited structures and modes of structuring knowledge premised on the primacy of geometrically determined logic and linguistically shaped theory. It challenges the solipsism of much contemporary art theory, and asserts that materially anchored modes of cognitive construction, of thinking through art, have value beyond the project and concerns of Fine Art.

The key question and methodology of this research, asked at every juncture, is: 'but *how* does that work?'

Commentary

Note about colour

The artefacts and book are not colour calibrated. Colour descriptions in the commentary accord with those of the journal photographs presented in *Volume One*. All page references made in the body of the commentary refer to those of *Volume One*.

Introduction

The project investigates the interplay between collage and grids in collagegrids practice, interrogating the *through* of thinking through art, where insights lie in *how* they function together, in the *how* rather than what of art practice.

The project methodology is hybrid, employing active documentation of the doctoral iteration of collagegrids to record the process, the theoretical, personal and practical concerns involved in the complexity of overlap of practice.

Volume One of studio documentation comprises a series of images of journal pages selected from the five books of documented studio practice which are presented in a published volume together with photographs of preliminary studies. Punctuated by wide shots of the studio they show the emerging composition in its different states and provide an initial commentary on the complexity of overlap of issues and concerns. Together they introduce a back and forth movement of interaction, of critical distance, overview, and overall perspective, with the close up, localised and particular. *Volume One* presents the movement of collagegrids practice, from preliminary studies and exercises, through its different and emerging states to its final exhibition. It journals the complicated process of construction in a complexity of overlap of the personal, theoretical and practical, the concerns and issues arising in practice. It references the work of others as it crops up during the process, which is part of the tacit knowledge and implied references of practice.

Adopting an 'insider' perspective, the accompanying commentary 'talks through' the collagegrids process and details the primary research outcomes and findings of the practice with the purpose of grounding discussion.

Presented in a single binding, *Volume One* documents collage grids practice as recorded in five studio journals, in a series of journal pages punctuated with preliminary exercises and studies and double page spreads of the various stages or states of the emerging composition. The layout of a single page presents a double page spread from the journals, a double page spread presents four pages, or two double page spreads of the journal format. This enables the content of several pages to be viewed simultaneously in the edited Volume showing the increasing momentum generated by practice. Finally it shows the collage grids exhibited in a gallery space.

The volume opens with a photograph of the journals.

The making process recorded here in photographs and handwritten notes are a form of active documentation, a hybrid approach, where the theoretical, personal and practical concerns of the studio based activities are brought together.

Following de Freitas' model, the active documentation of practice identifies the evolution of the working process, from initial drawing and studies, the collection, selection, cut and colouring of materials, to exhibition and reception of the resulting artworks, and documents its emerging complexity. By interspersing the journal images with wide studio shots which show the emerging collage grids composition, it presents a back and forth motion of studio working, of hands-on engagement together with critical distance. This movement generated by this change in scale is evident in the journal photographs themselves, and articulates clearly the associated movement of thought and the dynamics of thinking of art practice.

Active documentation captures accidental progress. It records serendipitous juxtapositions and surprise recollections; associations resulting from contingency, of sound, touch and smell, all sharing a transient present. It records problematic blocks, including the lack of resolution and final abandonment of the cloud idea, the overbearing summer heat and cooked inks.

Active documentation, or documentation during making, makes apparent phases of work that become invisible with progress. The tacit methods and art knowledge, that which goes without saying and is taken as read. The nuts and bolts of working, that gets overlooked or is assumed. That thinking is anchored in doing and grounded in making, in the very material concerns that constrain, enable or otherwise inform decisions. Recording emerging

artefacts at different stages enables the earlier states to be studied together, that otherwise are worked over.

The journals provide a detached record necessary for the abstraction of research issues, they provide evidence, making explicit, and become a source of reference. Although chronologically documented, they record the non-linearity of practice, the many and various incidental, parallel and overlapping activities. These activities include walking and drawing, reading, collecting, cutting, inking up, selecting, pasting up, stencilling, writing, visiting exhibitions, galleries, workshops and studios that constitute practice. In this way, active documentation plays a part in 'theory construction', where theory is drawn from practice and is constructed, not to fill a metaphorical 'gap' in knowledge but to articulate the thinking of practice, and so contextualise its significance for sharing with a wider audience.

Page 1, The Journals

Studio documentation comprises of five journals which are handwritten. Unlike the percussive tapping of keyboard input, the cursive pressure of pen on paper is more intimate, a constant tactile movement across the page. In writing, thinking is formulated in the manual gestural flow of pulling or pushing a marker across the smooth flat surface, carrying mental activity forward even as it writes. This is a linear process where the eye, read thinking, follows the hand in the formation of the linear letter residue across and down the page. Word processing also follows linear conventions of left to right, this time the rhythmic tapping producing letter marks as the words are formed on the screen.⁶² The intimate connection between dexterous handling of the pen is replaced by the successive collision of fingertips with keyboard, where complicated experience is diminished to a virtual 'god's eye' image. Ingrid Burgbacher – Krupka writes of Hanne Darboven in *Constructing Literary Musical – The Sculpting of Time*

By writing out and copying literature, scholarly texts, interviews and dictionary information, she discovered that 'the handwritten transfer of content-laden form into lived form' is an intense experience: 'I have copied again by hand, in order to be conveyed by the conveyed experience'. This confirms the 'concrete' nature of her work.⁶³

⁶² This is complicated by collage processes of cut 'n' paste, more on this later.

⁶³ Ingrid Burgbacher – Krupka, *Hanne Darboven: Constructed Literary Musical, The Sculpting of Time*. (London: Gothe-Institut, 1994), p. 40.

Practice is 'live' thinking, active, engaged and concrete. By handwriting the journal, copying out texts, drawing rain, smudging, handling coloured papers and lattices and positioning them onto the surface of the canvas, I too am conveyed, collaged, aligned and constructed by the experience. The intimate connection between collage grids thinking and its processes is through its concrete mode of production, its generation and formulation, and is evident in its outcome. The journals document this concrete mode of thinking through collage grids practice.

Pages 2-3, The Studio

These photographs are of each end of the studio, the place of practice. They show a light filled open space, recently inhabited, the walls hung with earlier artwork, it is tidy and full of possibility. The space is functional, where artwork, furniture and equipment can be moved around to accommodate the different activities and stages of working. As contextual study progresses the laptop, scanner/printer become firmly established, and files of notes together with reference books find a temporary home.

The space we inhabit impacts on our mode of production and on the work we produce. This was brought home to me on a visit to Tate Liverpool to see 'Mondrian and His Studios' exhibition and my reading about Schwitters Merzbau following the visit to Tate Britain 'Schwitters in Britain' exhibition. It has always been of interest to visit or read about fellow makers' studios and workshops.

The studio is both *denkraum*⁶⁴ and workshop⁶⁵ which alters as the project and seasons progress. The studio becomes part of the work. It provides a source of found material in ambient events, the changes in lighting, temperature and sound. It is also epistemic space.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Gwendolyn Webster writes of Warburg's conception of *Denkraum* as thought space, a kind of buffer zone, in "The Merzbau as Gesamtkunstwerk." In *Merz World: Processing the Complicated order*, ed. by Adrian Notz and Hans Ulrich Obrist, 43-80 (Zurich: JRP Ringer, 2007), p. 65.

⁶⁵ This follows the example of the Bauhaus workshops, which feature in *Bauhaus 1919-1928* ed. by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938).

⁶⁶ Henk Borgdorff, 'Artistic Practices and Epistemic Things' in *The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia* by Henk Borgdorff 140-173 (The Hague, Holland: Leiden University Press, 2012).

Preliminary Ideas

Pages 6-9, 45, Drawing and Photographs

Page 6 shows four images of the same drawing in progress. Grids are stencilled onto the paper using a pre-cut card stencil. These are then successively added to, erased and added to further, reinforcing, dissolving, and then restating the formal structure in a process of give and take. Photographs taken while walking are archived; a selected few are printed out for drawing over. Here, all drawing happens back in the studio, it is a process not of recollection but an act of construction.

The documented practice opens with first drawings and photographs taken while walking.⁶⁷ The habit and concept of moving through city or rural landscape features regularly in this artwork and practice. Moving through allows my thoughts to free wheel and disconnect, to take time out, while the steady regularity of heartbeat and rhythmic footfall moves me forward. Walking through landscape engages new, contingent experiences, sensuous interventions, such as noticing skin prickle with the cold, damp mist permeating inadequate clothing, this, correlated with muted colour and sound, airborne pigeons, calling crows, surrounding texture and horizons. Where noticing, paying attention, is key. In this way, correlations between seeing, feeling, smelling, hearing, touching become synchronised in the movement and scratchings of drawing, in a process whereby information drawn from across the senses becomes integrated.⁶⁸ Each drawing documents a particular moving through, or contingency bringing into a simultaneous present a rendering of what is sequential, in a graphic notational writing, a drawn score for music, a correlation of drawing and writing.⁶⁹

In drawing one, a stencilled grid imposes structure on the otherwise apparently unstructured white space of the paper. Projected, it makes apparent the tacit co-ordinates of pre-conception, invisible frames of reference, presumptions, assumptions and inherited realisations of how the world is. This structure is worked in to with gestural markings,

⁶⁷ The research project utilises photography for documentation purposes; to 'collect' visual phenomena as well as to record studio practice.

⁶⁸ Jay Seitz, 'Dalcroze, the body, movement and musicality', *Psychology of Music*, 419-435 (2005), Seitz writes 'Dalcroze felt that through the interplay of the natural rhythm of the body with musical aesthetics, artistic emotion was created', p. 422, and asks 'how does the body contribute to thought and musical understanding, in particular?' p. 425.

⁶⁹ Stephen Farthing and Janet McKenzie, *The Drawn Word: "Even if I write my name I am drawing"* (New York and London: Studio International and Studio Trust, 2014). AHRC research project exploring the relationship between writing, drawing and literacy

correlating drawing activity and its deposits with transient sensations lived while walking, bringing into the present a rendering of what is sequential. The act of drawing brings me into a multivalent and continuous present.

Pages 10-23, Conference poster

The collage grids poster format was a contribution to the poster competition for the Annual Post-graduate Student Conference. It presented the collage grids PhD project through collage grids practice. At this point I was looking to articulate collage grids thinking in terms of the cross-domain mapping of metaphor. The poster presents mechanisms of metaphor alongside the materials and methods of collage grids with the process of cross-domain mapping as the linking factor. Citing Saffer and Lakoff and Johnson, I write

‘In contemporary metaphor research, metaphor has come to mean a cross domain mapping whereby the source is mapped onto the target. Most importantly, this occurs in the conceptual system and the metaphorical expression is understood as being the individual expression, the word, sentence or phrase located in language.’⁷⁰

Metaphor exists through the act of interpretation, in the resolution of tension between the associations of the two objects.⁷¹

At this point I was considering whether collage grids might function in a similar cross domain mapping, where structures from the source domain of collage are projected onto the target domain of grids. And to establish this I needed to construct collage grids, record its processes and then reflect on the findings.

For the poster work, I trial new inks for clearer and more intense colours. With a crisp smudge free finish, the acrylic inks naturally, did not reconstitute with the later addition of water. Although the colours worked well, the inking process producing a thinner and more refined layer of colour on the paper, I found the instability provided by the less refined block printing inks to be a useful property when handling the wet pasted up papers.

⁷⁰ Dan Saffer, *The Role of Metaphor in Interactive Design* (2005) (online) http://www.odannyboy.com/portfolio/thesis/saffer_thesis_paper.pdf (accessed 06 30, 2011).
Lakoff and Johnson, 2003.

⁷¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Christian University Press, 1976).

Pages 25-26, Collographs and dry point etching

Collograph and dry point etching also contribute to these initial studies. These small portrait format works link texture, landscape, grids and the flock/swarm-like 'busy' distribution of individual events. Each print suggests a possible, hazy sort of idea for a panel.

Pages 30, 54-55, Rain drawing

The deluge drawing responded to a particularly noisy summer storm, the studio glass roof resounding with the pounding of heavy rain, its immediacy, intensity and proximity is correlated with rapid gestural dynamics of drawing and erasure completely covering and filling the surface of the paper. The rain drawings of others, Pat Steier, Ensor, Hokusai, and Pete Moss' scraffito surfaces come into mind in the process of making.

Developing Ideas

Larger studies, Collagertext drawing 1: Surrogate City, Collagertext drawing 2: Psychogeography, and Collagertext drawing 3: Metaphor, bring the initial ideas together in a more sustained manner.

These drawings are initial forays into ideas for the general layout of the six panel project. They bring together motifs and themes from the drawings, the photographs and current reading material, juxtaposing and overlapping them, to 'see what happens' and begin to think them through practice. Like Darboven, the hand drawn processing of 'content-laden material' into lived form is an intense experience.⁷² While working, my attention flickers and fluctuates between the layers of hand written or collaged words and overdrawing, between the text and erasure or the partially obscuring, muting, thin veil of paint.

Page 38, Collagertext drawing 1: Surrogate City

This A1 landscape composition brings together collaged texts, layout of six aligned rectangles, a plan of the six panels, together with a linear cloud arrangement, two colour and texture collographs, one the print plate of the other, two stencilled grid systems, a flock of 'V' shapes, and two small arrays of green squares. The text is partially washed with white paint to clarify and emphasise the rectangles of the six panels. By their close proximity they suggest rather than state possibilities for their arrangement.

⁷² Ingrid Burgbacher- Krupka, 1994, p. 40.

Text for this drawing is taken from the book *Surrogate City* by Hugo Hamilton.⁷³ The music from Heiner Goebbels 'Surrogate Cities' was featured on Radio Three and was playing in the studio at the time. In the sleeve notes Heiner Goebbels writes,

'Surrogate Cities' is an attempt to approach the phenomena of the city from various sides, to tell stories of cities, expose oneself to them, observe them; it is material about metropolises that has accumulated over the course of time. The work was inspired partly by texts, but also by drawings, structures and sounds, the juxtaposition of orchestra and sampler playing a considerable role because of the latter's ability to store sounds and noises ordinarily alien to orchestral sonorities. The associations I have are with a realistic, certainly contradictory, but ultimately positive image of the modern city. My intention was not to produce a close-up but try and read the city as text and then to translate something of its mechanics and architecture into music...I construct something that confronts the audience, and the audience reacts to it, discovering in the music a space they can enter complete with their associations and ideas.⁷⁴

The sleeve notes resonate with my unformulated ideas for juxtapositions of the musicality of colour, the noise provided by collage interaction, and the sound of the storm and rain in this collage grids composition. The juxtaposition and interplay of orchestra and sampler operate in much the same way as the forms of painting and drawing do with collage.

Page 37, Collagertext drawing 2: Psychogeography, Surrogate Cities

The A1 landscape format comprises two A2 portrait formats, here in a diptych of two drawings set side by side over handwritten text. Gestural drawing and erasure of the rain drawing is worked over two stencilled grid systems, a linear landscape of an electric pylon with flock of birds, pigeon or crows, with the addition of a scattering of ominous looking black squares. The tonal arrangement of this drawing operates in much the same way as that of my Grids 10, p. 57.

The handwriting is copied out from a text from the chapter 'The poetics of noticing' in *Everyday: Documents of Contemporary Art*.⁷⁵ This edited text by Kaufmann writing on Guy Debord, titled *The poetics of dérive* tells of the experience of moving rapidly through the varied environments of urban space,

⁷³ Hugo Hamilton, *Surrogate City* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990).

⁷⁴ From a conversation with Heiner Goebbels, in CD sleeve notes, *Surrogate Cities* Premiered at Southbank Arts Centre and performed by Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance/ Music.

⁷⁵ Stephen Johnstone, ed. *Everyday: Documents of Contemporary Art*. (London:UK and Cambridge, MA: USA: Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2008).

...to introduce poetry into the lived experience of the street. Psychogeography consisted in experimenting with the affective variants of the urban environment, an immediate aesthetic experience... brought about by walking round a city that is systematically explored...the meaning of *dérive*...which can be minimally defined as a controlled... collective... form of movement through several areas of the same city, in order to distinguish as objectively as possible, differences in ambiance or atmosphere...devoted to the interpretation of the city the way other examined texts...took pleasure in the city's streets, markets and cafés rather than its libraries and books...They moved from one environment to another, from one part of the city to another just as they passed through time...a projection into space of temporal experience, a directionless mobility, unproductive, serving no purpose, which is open to 'enticements of the terrain' and to encounters...there is a psychogeographic contour map associated with cities with their permanent currents, their fixed points and whirlpools that make entering or leaving quite difficult...entailing a preliminary determination of environment, the possibility of calculating them, establishing some form of objective understanding. *Dérive* comprises this letting go and its necessary contradiction...the documentation of psychogeographic variants to some extent a bet against chance...exercises in the recognition of or interpretation of the urban fabric or urban text...it would be wrong to conclude that the phenomenon was entirely new to the avant-garde – of the concrete experiences programmed by his essay...⁷⁶

Kaufmann writes of *dérive* as a form of noticing, a surrealist experiment with the city, of noticing your way through the environment, producing a flow of consciousness form,⁷⁷ similar in many ways to the automatic writing of Andre Breton. The writing resonates with my experience of alert and attentive walking which is applicable in both urban and rural contexts.⁷⁸ Active documentation produces a form of 'noticing' in that it produces heightened sense of awareness of an activity, but not, in this project, the same flow of consciousness form evidenced in Kauffman's account of Debord's work.

Page 39, Collagertext drawing 3: Metaphor

The text introduced to this collage drawing is taken from Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors we live by*.⁷⁹ It discusses metaphor in terms of the everyday functioning of our ordinary conceptual systems of thinking and acting and that our conceptual system plays a central role in defining our everyday reality. As with the poster, Surrogate City and Derive

⁷⁶ Vincent Kaufmann, 'The poetics of noticing' (2001) in Johnstone, 2008, pp. 95-102.

⁷⁷ Georges Perec, "The Street" in Johnstone, 2008, pp. 102-108.

⁷⁸ Richard Mabey on the 'post-nature', 'anti-pastoral' writing of authors such as Kathleen Jamie, Michael Symmons Roberts, and Robert Macfarlane, (online) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jul/18/richard-mabey-defence-nature-writing> (accessed 2 July 2016)

⁷⁹ Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p. 3.

texts, the introduction of the metaphor text to the artwork brings these content-laded words into constant attention, where the words and phrases provide the ground for work. The photocopy is reoriented from portrait and restructured to fit the landscape format of the six panels. As with drawing 2: Surrogate Cities, the collaged text is worked together with the linear cloud arrangement this time with a thin ink wash, the two stencilled grid systems, a flock of 'V' shaped birds, and the introduction of three brilliant yellow squares. Here too, the text is partially washed with white paint to clarify and emphasise the rectangles of the six panels. The six rectangles for panels provide a third grid system in this study, the first being the A2 stencil of the first drawing, the second a larger stencil, and the fourth, the small squares. Once again, the close proximity of these disparate elements suggests possibilities for their future composition.

These A1 size mainly tonal compositions serve to bring together the initially worked on ideas, by juxtaposing, projecting and overlapping one with another, and setting up spatial tensions on the working surface of the paper.⁸⁰

Pages 41-44, 46-47, and 57, Colour Exercises

The project set out to build spatial dynamics dependent on colour rather than tonal contrasts. Although light and dark exists in colour, in colour pigments, the intention is to utilise the warm and cool properties of colour, of brilliance and clarity together with its neutralised and neutral qualities. These studies, akin to musical scales, generate sensitivity to colour nuance and variation.

A small colour sketch loosely indicates the sort of colours and their arrangement in kind of premonitory sense of what I might do.

Working through the series of desaturated colour contrasts and greys, increases sensitivity in handling colour and heightens the awareness of colour and colour interactions in the environment, p. 45. It comes as a surprise to notice the orange marigolds and wet blue pavers (paving bricks) after a day of colour mixing and the appearance of their colours in the day's colour exercises, p. 44. The studio activities of colour mixing and attentive walking

⁸⁰ This refers to the pictorial space of painting. Abandoning direct reference to specific landscapes, artists' abstract work still relies on principles of constructing space, of overlapping, tonal contrast, colour contrast, contrasts of scale and size, relative location on the surface, in addition to tricks of Renaissance linear perspective. It is in the reciprocity of these that the spatial tension between what is foreground and what is background is established.

lead to crossovers in experience and possible connections, correlations of sound, movement, music and colour.⁸¹

Close abutment of colours increases their interaction and creates, among other things, a sensation of depth or 'pictorial' space. Properties of material colour show that against white, colour appears solid, as they are all darker. While against black, colours appear transparent with an impression of being back lit like a coloured glass window. The solidity against white results in a sense of surface projection, of a forward or 'advancing' sensation while the lighter back ground appears to recede, to move back, p50.⁸² It is in this way that surface tension is built up. The tension between advance and recede is altered and adjusted by each addition introduced onto the surface, p. 44.

Colours appear connected predominately in space. As constellations they can be seen in any direction and at any speed.⁸³

Constellations such as the distribution of yellow of the hawthorn leaves, or autumnal red of the blueberry leaves, p. 45, although dotted across space they appear connected by a shared colour. This flickering, darting movement is a side to side movement across the space, where as the saturated/unsaturated and warm/cool colour movement also sets up an advance/recede movement in pictorial space, similar to that in the landscape photograph at the top of page 45. The spread papers in the photograph at the top of page 44 confounds this sense of distance recession as the blue 'cool' colours are placed over the 'warmer' yellow and oranges, which reverse this logic.

Initially, ideas for colour selection and arrangement are brought forward from the earlier Grids 10, p. 57. A general principle that I use in getting started is to reflect on and take up where earlier work left off. This provides early momentum to the project, contextualising it in relation to earlier thinking and ideas.

In Grids 10 the cloud-like distribution of rape field yellow against a lowering Paynes grey sky generated flickering colour interactions and tonal contrasts between yellow and the light neutralised purple. The colour combinations of brilliant yellows with grey-violets rehearsed

⁸¹ There is nothing new in making these connections see Hajo Düchting, *Paul Klee- Painting Music*. (Munich, London, New York : Prestel, 2002), Karin Von Maur, *The Sound of Painting in Modern Art*. (Munich, London, New York : Prestel, 1999), Peter Vergo, *The Music of Painting: Music, Modernism and the Visual Arts*. (London and New York: Phaiden, 2010). Musicians making connections with painting and collage include Bernard Hughes and Christopher Fox.

⁸² Josef Albers, *Interaction of Colour*. (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1963) and Johannes Itten, *Design and Form: The Basic Course at the Bauhaus*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963).

⁸³ Albers, 1963, p.39

on page 57 is also used by Mondrian in *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, to which he adds red and blue.

I ink up plain papers in a range of neutral and neutralised colours, exploring opportunities presented by colour mixing with a roller, p. 43, which results in either flat colour or a textured mix.

Pages 47-55, Idea for collage grids no.1

I select a range of blue and blue-green papers for a preliminary compositional study on stretched canvas. *Idea for collage grids no.1* is a colour study of irregular areas of restrained repeated colour with the partial introduction of the rain event.

The selection and arrangement of coloured papers on the canvas sets up what Itten calls a visual 'configuration' or simultaneous pattern. 'The eye tends to put colours together, so that when the colours are many, several simultaneous patterns may co-exist...The effect of the composition depends on the forms, features, directions and spacing of simultaneous patterns.'⁸⁴

Idea for collage grids no.1 sets up a configuration of blues and ochres, in an additive process of abutting and overlapping papers, cut lattice and resulting squares with gestural oil bar drawing.

The developing composition brings into mind the collage juxtaposition of rectangular shapes of work by Victor Pasmore, and the overlapping intersecting planes in paintings by Ben Nicholson.

Pages 86-87, 93-102, Idea for collage grids no. 2

This preliminary study takes place alongside work in progress on the larger canvasses. *Idea for collage grids no.2* is a detail study using an area of text from Higgins' book 'On Grids'. Just as the texts *Surrogate Cities*, *Dérive* and *metaphor* provide 'found' material for collage so too this study draws on a particular text. The content of the text, the words 'frames of mind', 'order' and 'chaos', 'grids', 'human sensory frameworks', 'connecting' and 'combining', comes and goes in front of me as I handle the papers, ink up, cut out, position and stick them down. Although the words retain their relative positioning their coloured ground is fragmented in floating overlapping grid forms. The composition

⁸⁴ Johannes Itten, *The Elements of Color: A Treatise on the Color System of Johannes Itten, Based on His Book "The Art of Color"*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1970), p. 92.

becomes an interplay of simultaneous patterning and distribution of colour and shape on one hand and the sequencing of enlarged font of the imported text on the other; the former operating an advance/recede movement pulling against an insistent left to right orienting sideways path of the writing. The work on canvas and accompanying second study on paper both rehearse and extend configurations of collage established in the earlier study, *Idea for collagegrids no.1*. It also extends the colour palette, with the introduction of oranges and reds, and it complicates the lattice/module relationship by their alignment with the constituent photocopied text. This work on canvas provides me with a blueprint for the intended direction for the six panel composition. The second version on paper was later cut up for a different study.

Collagegrids: a six panel canvas

Collagegrids is the title of this artwork. It is also the name given to its mode of construction. The artwork follows the practice of multi-section work of Renaissance diptychs and triptychs. The scale is dictated by practical constraints, the current project is the maximum size for the studio. The stretched primed canvas provides a lightweight wall mounted surface and when dismantled makes for easy handling and transportation. The scale of this work precludes a 'god's eye' view. In close proximity, the surface area of the six panels fills the field of vision, and the working process engages the whole body in kinaesthetic activity.

Pages 62-63, Collagegrids: First state

The wall mounted stretched canvasses place this practice in the tradition of painting in Western Art. Each stretcher has a single brace. As canvas doesn't readily stretch around complex forms, the self-contained rectangle became the usual format for artists.

The stretchers are knocked together and each canvass is hand stretched and primed in the studio p. 59. Unfortunately, the corner folds are positioned on the side of each frame and not on the top which slightly compromises their close abutment p. 60. With reference to Rauschenberg's *White Painting (three Panel) 1951*, I notice the extent of the changing light in the studio and how it falls on the white surface. The fluctuating light levels are particularly apparent in the unevenness in the studio photographs of the emerging composition which were taken at different times of day and over a period of months. This state establishes the extent of the compositional field.

Pages 66-67, Collagegrids: Second state

In order to stabilise the canvas surface and successfully accept the fragile paste covered papers, the work requires a stretched paper ground. I systematically paste draft copies of the PhD transfer documentation together with other recycled papers onto the canvas, carefully working with the sideways stretch of the A4 paper to ensure a drum tight surface. Once dry the panels can be hung in their vertical position on the wall batons. This is the 'ground' on which the doctoral study is built.

Pages 70-71, Collagegrids: Third state

Working systematically, I had been paying attention to qualities of paper and drying conditions, concerned to achieve the desired flat surface. Next I infilled the blank pages with pages of text to provide an all over distribution and density of text texture with the occasional randomly occurring image. The first grid form is created by the systematically placed and glued papers, and the systematically arranged areas of text. This primary layering of text with image on canvas produces the suggestion of a veil-like low relief, where the text layer floats in front of its white background.

Pages 76-77, Collagegrids: Fourth state

A stencilled grid is drawn onto the drum tight stretched paper surface in pencil. The card stencils used are cut to a particular grid format previously arrived at. The stencil imposes a pre-formed and existing grid structure which is projected, the arrangement re-enacted through a systemised drawing onto the working surface.

Building on a base layer of A4 papers in a single layer grid format, the constructed first grid is stencilled over with a secondary grid, p. 69. Although this grid format is itself partially structured by the repeated stencilling, its objective is for the grid to extend across the field and project a single grid form, a surface unified by mapping. Human error accounts for the lack of exact alignment, which is rectified through restating local relationships, using a ruler to align the adjacent rectangles.

The modernist grid is a single grid format of uniform arrangement. Artists using this format include Mondrian, Agnes Martin, Bridget Riley, Sol Le Witt, among others, where,

The grid is a forming principle, a structure to work with and against. It is a systematic structure imposed upon the surface.⁸⁵

Previous study asked of grids: are they rigid reductionist strait jackets or structures investigating relationality?⁸⁶ Neither either/or, the collaged grids of MA study opted for both. Working with grids raises issues of confinement and restraint as well as relationality and mutuality in the structuring and structures themselves.

As before, this projected grid serves to make apparent tacit co-ordinates of pre-conception, invisible frames of reference, presumptions, assumptions and inherited realisations of how the world is. I paint the connecting lattice part of the grid with thinned white primer which partially obscures the text layer to establish a lattice across the whole area and from which emerges a pattern of text and partial filled text rectangles, in a low level reverberation and fizzle of white noise. The projected grid sets up a clear binary system of module and lattice, p. 72-73, where the background text grid is partly obliterated by the overpainting of the lattice p.76 -77.

Pages 88-89, Collagegrids: Fifth State

Coloured pages of enlarged text are selected from the pile, pasted and slid onto the grid field. The texts are extracts from current reading material which includes extracts from *The Grid Book* by Hannah Higgins, Marshall Berman's *All that is Solid melts into Air*, Rosalind Krauss essay 'On Grids' and Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors we live by*. Previous study used text selected for their references to collage to be a primary feature of that study, here texts selected for this work forefront reference to grids and grid structuring. The freshly inked papers are laid out on the floor to dry, p. 93.⁸⁷ In Müller's words,

The texts are laid out in front of me - they do not need to be recalled, imagined or searched for – they are simultaneously available...you push them around with your hand until you say to yourself; that's how I want it.'⁸⁸

The areas of coloured text cover up and partially obscure the grid. They introduce floating forms, perhaps stray modules from other systems, which hang, suspended, in front of the established field.

⁸⁵ James Hugonin, in *The Experience of Painting - Eight Modern Artists*, ed. by M. Gooding, (London: South Bank Centre, 1988), p.30.

⁸⁶ Cilla Chapman, *MA Journal*. (Unpublished, Leeds Metropolitan University, 1993).

⁸⁷ Also Volume One, pp. 111, 115, 118, 124, 148, 149

⁸⁸ Müller quoted in *Manifesto Collage: Defining Collage in the Twenty-First Century* ed. by Christiane Salm, (Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2012), p. 173.

Pages 106-107, Collagegrids: Sixth State

The floating rectangles of coloured text are stencilled and painted over as before and with it the new additions dissolve into the 'background' space behind the white lattice.⁸⁹ The restated grid form returns the dominant and stabilising structuring format, anchoring and enmeshing the floating shapes. While the absorbed areas retain their coloured identity they are integrated into the structure as a whole, where the grid retains its constant regular identity, unifying the field.

I identify this as the state of 'tabula rasa'.⁹⁰ Not the clean slate, but an already structured field, where origins are a matter of sticking a pin in the map, reading the coordinates and saying this is where I am now, this is where I am starting out from; where the past is as much of a construction as the future.

Pages 112-113, Collagegrids: Seventh State

Across this established state I draw a black linear form which travels across the gridded surface of the panels. Read left to right or right to left, its course is mapped against the established grid coordinates, at once covering and revealing the system beneath. The cloud form is drawn onto the collaged paper using charcoal thinned with water, intending to indicate the extent of compositional areas of light and dark, to operate in much the same way as in Grids 10, p. 57.

Uncertain about this intervention, both in terms of its projected compositional arrangement and tonal insistence, with judgement suspended, I am confident that the process will, in due course, provide a resolution.

This state brings together cloudscape with grids in a cross domain mapping, whereby the structure of one is projected onto the structure of the other.

Pages 116-117, Collagegrids: Eighth State

The large areas of text indicated in the scheme, p. 115, are pasted across the field. As in the addition of large areas of text in state 5, they partially obscure both grid and linear form, erasing the initial text layer and structure on panel 2 and 3, p. 116, and appearing to hang in front of it on panels 4 and 5, p. 117. By working over, not replicating or reinforcing existing forms, both grid and drawn forms appear to disintegrate and dissolve.

⁸⁹ In painterly terms this is called 'knocking back'.

⁹⁰ This is also the title of a musical composition by Arvo Pärt.

The addition of these papers complicates the pictorial space, particularly for the foreground and background relationship of advance and recede, of not following the already established logic of white is back, dark is forward. It also confounds by its 'matter of fact' surface addition of layers of paper and glue, where the latest additions are literally in front and on top. It also destabilises the system by introducing gaps in the grid, in particular the addition of the muted grey-blue light purple areas which make for a fluctuating reading of imposed/dissolved grid and covered up/erased drawing. This presents a dilemma arising from the intervention of the black linear cloud form which has turned out to be more complex than anticipated. The approach, similar to that of the Grids 10, intended for this composition ran into difficulties with the arrangement of lights and darks reversed. For the composition to be led primarily by colour arrangements based on the solidity of colour, then colour needs to be placed against white in order to create a sense of its opacity and solidity, as all colour pigment is darker than white.

The current situation points towards a primary compositional mode of light and dark contrast and a play of colour across dark forms resulting in a sense of colour transparency, as if the composition was lit from behind, an idea incompatible with this project. Counter to the intentions of the project of constructing space with colour, this intervention was not pursued further. The residue and traces of the discontinued, some might read failed idea, remain evident in the final state.

Pages 122-123, Collagegrids: Ninth State

The surface is once again stencilled over with linear rectangles. In places the projection follows the existing grid, reaffirming, clarifying and reasserting the system and embedding any new additions into its structure. In other places the stencil is not aligned and the grids are off set, again upsetting the logic of the single grid system. The new rectangular drawn modules create tension with the existing system, opening up dilemma and raising questions. To recover logic requires back tracking the system to establish what follows on from what and where. Only after recapping what is 'correct' or 'right', can one identify the bit that doesn't fit, asking, what runs true to the original structure and what changes.

The rain event is included in the composition, resonating as it did with events which also occurred during the course of the project, p. 30. It is mapped out onto the surface with green lines to indicate its intended position in panels 4&5. A third grid system is

introduced. Comprising cut lattices together with cut-out squares, they are distributed in panels 1, 2 and 6. The small porous lattice provides a device for 'bridging' two solid areas of colour, the mesh easing the passage across the cut edge from one area to the other, partially dissolving difference. So far, the modules produced by the imposed drawn and painted grid are static, available in their fixed relations predetermined by the stencil. With collage, which deals in transferrable areas of cut paper, both lattice and their resulting modules are free floating, made readily available to be placed at will, and, potentially, anywhere in the field.

This first addition of cut lattice does not follow the existing orthogonal structure. While it dissolves the brown rectangle of enlarged text in panel 6, it retains the sentence from Castel's quoting of Marx, 'all that is solid melts into air'. The diagonal placing of the lattice, favoured by the de Stijl designer Van Doesburg, disrupts and destabilises the vertical and horizontal coordinating code of Mondrian's orthogonal single grid composition, and dislodges the established relations of rationality. It not the writing that is dissolved but the 'colour' or persuasion of the ground on which it is represented, recalling the Surrealist's Manifesto statement,

We make no claim to change the mores of mankind, but we intend to show the fragility of thought, and on what shifting foundations, what caverns we have built our trembling houses.⁹¹

How far are the established structures fixed? How far are they maintained and re-established each time their inherited configuration is brought into the lived present, through practice?

Pages 128-129, Collagegrids: Tenth State

Against the dark grey and black linear intervention, the small squares flicker and dance with beginnings of different composition. Populating the surface, they create a run, passage or bridge between two areas or across several, linking them, notably in panels one and six.

Just as my sensitivity to colour interaction is heightened by the colour exercises, so too is the sensitivity to the interplay of sound and movement; orientation enlivened by noticing and listening while out walking. Reading 'Surrogate Cities', recollecting of walks around London, I am alerted to inherent possibilities of juxtapositions to be set up by introducing

⁹¹ Aragon, 1925.

the Kaufmann text, 'The Poetics of Dérive' onto the panels. The partial phrases selected earlier for collage grids drawing no.2: Psychogeography are handwritten across the top of the six panels in an 'automatic' like, blackboard type writing. Drawn across the surface, the layout of the text is reconfigured, altered from that presented on the original page. Initially intended to cover the whole surface, it too is a partial account.

By writing over the collage surface of partial grids with the linear code of linguistics, I am assembling one set of partial grids over another. Writing over artwork, in this instance the written word does not dominate, but provides context, texture and 'noise' to an otherwise clean and crisp upper section. Drawn over the disrupted grid system, the *dérive* passage invites connections to be made between moving through the city and moving through the space constructed by the composition. It is an invitation to study the canvasses as a form of *dérive* immersion, to move across and through, scanning from area to area, 'distinguishing as objectively as possible differences in ambiance or atmosphere'; an invitation to move from one part to another just as one passes through time – a projection into space of temporal experience. The movement of *between*, the one and the other, leads to oscillation between the different readings/viewings, between the linear structure of written text and the field of colour, texture and pattern, between two different modes of interpretation, working together, simultaneously, to construct a polyvalent cross domain reading, meaning.

Following Müller again:

Of course you know what you want, but the moment you do it, it becomes a chance act...and if it turns out to be a fortunate co-incidence then you're satisfied and leave it be, even though you know that if it had been a day later or at a different time, everything would have been different.⁹²

Pages 138-139, Collagegrids: Eleventh state

From the colour contrasts of cool blues, muted purple-grey and brilliant lemon yellows to warmer colour opposites, the red-green with orange combination 'lifts' the composition. The addition of further papers spell the end of the cloud drawing.

The colour palette is livened; the restrained cool colours, a play of opposite brilliant yellows and light violet-grey blues, give way to brighter contrasts of reds, oranges and greens.

⁹² Herta Müller Literary Collages in Salm, 2012, p. 173.

Although intended as primarily colour composition in a decisive but unclear way, it still comes as a surprise. Strategies of collage are premised on such chance moments of fortunate coincidence, on contingencies of place and time, and of frame of mind. From collecting to selecting the papers for modification, and colouring and cutting the lattices, asking which text, how many layers needed, p. 118, collage is based on working with what is 'at hand' and recognising the contingency of its contributory factors, elements and events (distribution of birds, leaves, modules, p. 6, walking colours, p. 124 inks cooked,). It always comes as much of a surprise, like noticing the marigolds and wet brick pavers after a day of colour mixing, and the juxtaposition of their colours in the day's exercises, p. 44.

A fourth grid system added, a 3 x 5 system is initially contained within the panel, is sketched out on p. 136. The three red rectangles of panels one and two is where a 3 x 5 grid system shows up (see p. 134 for grid drawn over panel two in photograph). These rectangles appear as 3 x 5 grid modules, shifted from their location anchored in the rectangle of the panel, the bottom line of which are slid to the left, partially aligned with the existing grey lattice, and appear as inked areas rolled directly onto the collage surface. A further area is inked up below, a truncated module indicating a continuation of the composition beyond the canvas edge.⁹³ A similar sized but larger A4 red rectangle in panel three is pinned temporarily, and then pasted. Its colour links it with the system of red modules while at the same time disrupts a wider reading of that system as it is not quite in alignment. These strongly coloured areas call to attention and are echoed in the now apparent rectilinear A3 size areas of grey above, which together guide decisions to introduce further A3 coloured papers in panel four and five p. 136-7, and where the orange module of panel five echoes the similar area of grey in panel two and grey brown area top of panel six.

The approximately A4 size rectangles are introduced in red, inked directly onto the panels to form the rectangles in panels one and two, and also in an indeterminate unformed area in panels five and six. Rather than being contained or confined by the panel boundary, they are offset so as to bridge panels 1 and 2 and are a partial arrangement of what was sketched out. They are slightly aligned with the grey lattice of similar size but different colour in panel 2 and are echoed in red, fractured and partial, in areas across the six canvasses.

⁹³ Rosalind Krauss writes of this continuation, 'Logically speaking, the grid extends, in all directions, to infinity. Any boundaries imposed upon it by a given painting or sculpture can only be seen – according to this logic – as arbitrary.' In her essay "Grids" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, by Rosalind Krauss, 9-22 (MIT Press, 1985), p. 18.

Pages 140-141, Collagegrids: Twelfth state

I pin coloured papers to the canvas in a temporary act of imagination, removing and the replacing them again, flicking them back and forth, bringing coloured paper and canvas together flick book like, determining the extent of colour to be introduced, its position, solidity and shape. The papers are moved around, removed, modified and returned. The cut lattices are also temporarily pinned up before being stuck down. Sometimes a partial lattice is cut away from a trimmed paper, a hybrid form of modified paper and lattice, seen in the red area in panel four. Green lattice introduced in panel five fills out the area between the two areas of red/orange, enriching it with the fluctuation of opposite and contrasting colour modules. A run of green modules extend downwards and serves to link this area with that of the 'all that is solid' area of panel six.

A green paper is introduced as a partially cut lattice which partly reveals the background, p. 141 panel 5. A further green lattice is introduced above to continue the green plane bridging the red areas. A red lattice is added to the top of the panel which effectively extends the red field top to bottom and resonates with the red rectangles to the bottom of panels 1, 2 and 3. A modified red lattice is introduced at the bottom of panel 4. In the same way, green lattices are distributed across the compositional field, then others, and modules, all complicating the spatial dynamic of advance and recede, up and down, and side to side.

The introduction of blue and white oil bar announces the intervention of the rain event explored in earlier studies, p. 30. Surrounded by these studies I am constantly aware of them in my work space p. 137. Their close proximity in my every day working constantly reminds me of where I am going with the composition and what I want to do, without this being articulated in any formal plan. The practice operates through juxtaposition of past work, of mine and others, constantly considering areas, materials, techniques or mini processes to select and develop, to change their ordering, by reordering their selection and addition, their colour, tonality, intensity and saturation, distribution etc. Each artwork is the result of a specific ordering, one off associations between action and ambient environment, weather, what is on the radio, and what is next in the process of engaging with practice. The process is not replicable and although the resulting order cannot be planned for, it is far from senseless.

In broad gestural waves, the deluge cascades in a formal rush of blue oilbar. This is its first layer and fixes the extent of its fall, p. 140-141. The rain event is positioned as indicated across panels three to five, the majority falling in panel four. It is worked over the emerging collage grids composition, and is a further code, a constructed system. The aligned event and action, a correlation of storm, sound and gestural mark, is introduced into the field of collage grids in a primary act of constructive cognition in concrete lived form.

Pages 144-145, Collage grids: Thirteenth state

The temporary papers are modified and trimmed, pasted and slid into place, and a different movement develops with the breaking up of the solid areas of red and green in panel three, p. 143, integrating background and foreground. The lattices and modules, which through their arrangement link areas, form bridges and passages which connect the partial elements and areas in associations of colour, shape, distribution and patterning. Colour also constructs alignment, in constellations,⁹⁴ configurations or simultaneous patterns⁹⁵ as much as the linear mode of the drawn stencilled grids.

In places, word and grid are aligned to create a continuum which colour disrupts, p. 147, p. 23 and p. 102. Close reading/viewing of the surface gives lie to a distance surface reading, where green paper is placed over red, which is over green. In the distance reading, all the green paper reads as background, so that the red area appears as cut lattice to reveal a background where a close-up reading shows differently. The surface appears to fluctuate, oscillating back and forth, until neither one nor the other can be distinguished as spatially dominant or in recession. It fluctuates as lattice merges with square modules, one grid formation with another producing an unstable reading/viewing. What is significant here is that although the system of small and partial grids merge, each element or entity retains its clear identity. Gaps which appear between the coloured papers are held together by the linear narrative of the text which hangs gossamer like over the colour collage or alternatively, suspended behind its glassy facade. On closer scrutiny, the text is not continuous but fractured, broken. Constructed rather than projected, stretch occurring in the process of applying the thinned glue and misplacement of paper as it is slid into position creates mismatch or misalignment in letter spacing and continuity, p. 95.

The back and forward oscillating movement is played out in the movement between working up-close reducing the field of engagement to the immediate area, and standing

⁹⁴ Albers, 1963, p. 37- 43.

⁹⁵ Itten, 1970, p. 90.

back, breaking off intimate engagement and withdrawing to a position where the whole composition can be seen. Each position provides a different reading/viewing of the composition, both are valuable. The interplay of this difference through bringing these together provides a fuller account and opportunity for greater understanding. This oscillation between close detailed working to distanced critical overview is presented in Volume One by the close up journal images of work in progress interspersed with long studio shots of the canvasses in progress.

Pages 150-151, Collagegrids: Fourteenth state

Green and red modules are added to panel two, and ordered in such as they construct a floating array forming their own partial grid, linking the middle grey area of panel 2 with the lower area of green of panel 3. A further green lattice is introduced in panel 3, which links to the same in panel 5. The move constructs similarity resulting in resonance; it does not find similarity but builds it. Reflecting on this action, I notice more links connecting different parts of the new field. The temporarily pinned yellow lattices do not make it to sticking down stage, and are removed.

At this stage it is possible to begin to see the composition emerge in an assembly of partial structures and units, in the bits and pieces of lattice, the small fields of structured grids, and their accompanying square modules.

What was once the uniform space of a systematically structured format is now a field of distinct and fluctuating forms. Although the canvasses themselves have no physical protrusions beyond layers of thin paper, what could once be read/viewed as broadly two dimensional pictorial space with marginal depth, is now developing a dynamic of movement in constructed three dimensional pictorial space. Scanning the work from critical distance, your attention is drawn back and forth across the surface, advancing and receding into pictorial space, making links between coloured areas, greens, reds, yellows and blues, between lattices, between small groupings of modules, passages of modules running across unbroken coloured areas and across broken coloured areas creating bridges. Tonal similarities are noticed, particularly between the menacing grey areas (panel 1 and 2), mysterious, like the black monoliths of *2001 Space Odyssey*.⁹⁶ Connections can be made between differing entities, in the jumps of juxtaposition and abutment as much as by similarity.

⁹⁶ The epic science fiction film produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick in 1968.

Working on one area or theme has unintended consequences on others. Small changes made when working the area of green over red of panel 3 result in altered relationships with the red shapes of panel 5. As similar repercussions are noticed, resulting from small modifications and minor additions, so the dynamic of the whole is altered.

The composition is made more complicated, not just in the sense of its increasing intricacy, its having many interconnecting parts or elements, but also in the sense of the irreducibility of the process to a set of rules. In *Merzworld: processing the complicated order*,⁹⁷ Friedman describes this irreducibility as a one dimensional relation, an order for which you cannot make an abridged form through mathematical formulas.⁹⁸ There is no simplification without loss, in sensitivity (to repercussions for the detail, local relations, and implications of change) as much as content.

The collage grids process is neither random nor reproducible. In practice, time is not necessarily experienced as only sequential, but also as simultaneity where everything happens at once. On the canvas in the simultaneous patterning and constellations of lines, colours and partial grids; the drawn lines of stencilled rectangles, of handwriting and printed text, rain drawing, different areas of colour, of overlapping lattices, and runs of aligned modules. Contingent constellations of events occurring simultaneously.

The collage grids process of making entails many things happening at once, entails alertness to many things happening simultaneously. It is by the logic of association that links are created between what is different and disparate, a non-linear logic of juxtaposition, of papers on canvas, of noticing many things at the same time, an awareness of a complexity of overlap of the different domains. It is through documenting the process that chronological order is constructed and sequence is established. Collage grids becomes sequential in retrospect. Documenting makes evident the complex and complicated processes and processing of practice. Through the increasing complexity of bringing together, by associating, linking and connecting, collage grids becomes a compound of correlations, a simultaneous sequential of things and events, a composition.

⁹⁷ Adrian Notz and Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds. *Merz World: Processing the Complicated Order*. (Zurich: JRP Ringer Kunstverlag AG, 2007). Purchased at 'Schwitters in Britain', 2013, Tate Britain, Volume One p. 84.

⁹⁸ Yona Friedman in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist in Notz & Obrist, 2007, p. 101.

Page 155

The process of bringing together many different papers is clearly demonstrated in the photograph on p. 155 where the several papers temporarily pinned to the canvass overlap, occupying the same space, in an attempt to resolve the area of the lower join between panels 4 and 5. This area of text is the same as the extract worked in the preliminary study, p. 102. It serves a different purpose here, appearing below the rain event, an area overlooked until now. The different coloured paper shapes, off cuts from the two earlier studies, are brought together with the canvas, arranged, rearranged, trimmed and then cut to produce partial lattices which are then pasted down. In the process of selection and modification, the papers are pinned, moved and re-pinned in order to ascertain what will be cut away and what will remain and how these might work together. It is not a smooth process but one of jumps and cuts, colour and text, placing and altering edges and runs. The resulting format has the porous orange-red lattice showing the light blue underneath, together with some light blue cut-out modules arranged on top. Building up this area bridges the join of panel 4 and 5, with the intention of it being partially obscured by the deluge rain drawing, p. 158. The result of which differs radically from the compositional arrangement of the preliminary study.

Page 160

This image of a tray of square modules held up against the panel in progress shows the close proximity of the immediate situation. The process demands paying attention to one, in this case the relations between the squares, the text, the dark green corner above, yellow deposit, drawn rectangle edge, overlapping, smudged and scuffed texture of paint and charcoal residue, taking all into account, then checking the tray of modules, a situation full of potential and possibility, one not lost in a decided course of action, then returning to the assembled composition, having selected one to add and with which to modify it, and so create a new set of relations, a new field. In practice the new field exists in a state of constant flux.

Pages 162-163, Collagegrids: Fifteenth state

Evident in this state is the development of the middle section of panel 2. By the addition of modified papers, white lattices, the directly inked surface and several modules, the impact of yellow areas is heightened and is changed by the grey. A continual switch from square to lattice, lattice to square occurs throughout the process – so that movement

across the surface is created by both positive and negative forms which then become interchangeable. As one area is added to and is altered, so the whole is changed. Relations between the parts and the whole are in constant tension – not in balance particularly, as balance is not the point - but tension is, so is dynamic movement between and across colours, shapes, marks and patterns. As a result of the change, panel 6 also receives an addition of yellow ink, p. 154, and the A4 size green rectangle.

Notwithstanding interruptions by the ongoing documentation, when immersed in the process for a period of time, working becomes freer and more flowing, intuitive, an apparent automaticity of action. This fluid activity is documented on pages 157, 160-161, and 164 in the development of modules across the A4 green rectangle in panel 6. In response to this development, the green flyer is added to panel 1, which although smaller than the area in panel 6 share a similar hue and as a consequence draw together either end of the composition. These invisible associations of attention, attractions, alignments, simultaneous patterns and constellations of tone, hue, colour, sharp edge, soft edge, small square, lattice, drawn rectangle, A4 areas, larger A3 shaped areas, are noticed, constructed and held together in the alert and engaged attention of the participating audience as well as by the glue on the canvas.

Pages 168-169, Collagegrids: Sixteenth state

Documentation of the process demonstrates that by introducing contingences of lived experience into the mode of working, so the process becomes increasingly complicated and less reproducible.

The central deluge of rain is reworked; its intervention is given greater substance.

The rain event oil bar is worked over the recently applied orange area on panel 4. The oily deposit does not completely cover up its underlying ground in the same way that paper does. Blue pigment tends to be a mildly transparent colour lacking the opacity of earth colours, of reds and browns, and is used together with a transparent bar to facilitate application onto the absorbent surface. The desaturated blue gestural marks have the effect of 'knocking back' the surface features of edges and local areas into the pictorial space.

A by-product of working is the smudgy finger marks left while handling the oilbars. These accidental prints are extended across the surface with the smudging action of transparent oil bar, which results in softening the black and white contrasts of text/writing and white

ground which are lessened by the patina of smudges and scuffs. They reduce the tonal contrast of pencil/printed text and light background, and the authority commanded by the writing and text is diminished by this treatment. The lessening of contrasts also complicates notions of surface and depth and destabilises the reading of the relative positions of the composite elements in the constructed pictorial space. Although a cool colour, the blue should in theory recede, in practice, the most recently applied blue rain event comes to the forefront of the composition, in literal and pictorial space, and which to some extent pulls the existing recessive blue areas of background, by association, into the foreground with it. This all results in a heightened sense of instability, of fluctuation, 'coming and going' and indeterminacy.

At this stage all working is by improvisation, guided by touch and gut reaction. Increasingly, less is more, and the more lightly worked areas become as prominent as those worked. Sensitised to the rhythms and movement constructed in the complex relations of shape, pattern, line and colour, each newly introduced module or small adjustment has ramifications for its local area which in turn affects the dynamic of the whole.

Pages 180-181, Collagegrids: Seventeenth and final state

Streaks of crimson, orange and white are integrated into the blue gestures of the rain. One of the last papers to be stuck down is a modified green fragment, pasted on the deluge in panel 4. The deluge is once again 'knocked back' into the composition. A few rain smudges in turn embed the green area into pictorial space. Unlike the projected black linear intervention which is all but a residual memory, the rain event is incorporated into and cascades through the constructed collagegrids space.

Grey square modules are added to panel one, scatter-like, forming a flickering passage of neutralised blues, greens and oranges across the panels to the bottom left and again in the far right of the canvasses.

Although the composition will remain unfinished, this is a safe place for the project to pause. The collagegrids process is not one that can be completely finished as the process of composition, its method of construction, is always receptive to further addition. It is a matter of aesthetics or exhibition deadline rather than process that determines the compromise of completion.

Unlike all previous photographs, this image is composite, a Photoshop digital collage of six photographs taken in the gallery in day-light. Colour monitored and relevelled, it is possibly the most accurate presentation of the constructed colour relations of collage grids.

Pages 183-184, Exhibition

The collage grids canvasses are relocated from studio to gallery space. Exhibition is integral to practice; it is a space of reflection, showing, discussion and exchange. Exhibition demands considerations of wall fixings, exhibition content and layout, wall texts of contextualising and explanatory notes, opening hours and invitations. This occasion involves a talk, participatory workshop activity and reception. Gallery viewing is always different to studio viewing; the former views the object as a summary experience, the latter, in the midst of composition. In exhibition, each work can be seen in relation to others, and, as in earlier juxtapositions of collage, interplay happens and 'conversation' sparks up between them. The gallery 'frames' the artwork as propositions to pay attention to, for contemplation. In the words of Agnes Martin,

...the response to the art is the real art field. The work of art is not an object or event but the experience engendered within the mind of the artist and viewer.⁹⁹

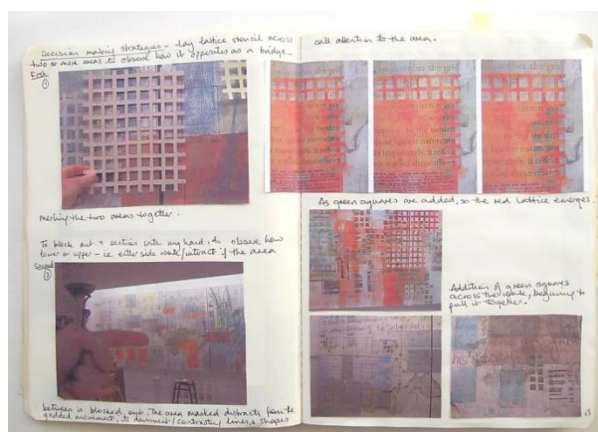
⁹⁹ Agnes Martin, following Dewey in *Agnes Martin ed. by Frances Morris and Tiffany Bell*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2015), p. 230.

Primary Research Outcomes and Findings

Through documenting the working process, the journals document the thinking process. The working process is the thinking process, where the latter can be traced in the former.

The thinking of collagegrids is not to be found so much in the accompanying handwritten notes, the purpose of which is not to download onto paper a stream consciousness of fully or partially formed internal monologue, but in the complexity of overlap of handwritten notes, collaged tickets and news cuttings, together with the series of photographs and the short sequences documenting specific actions. Collagegrids thinking is a fragmentary and unfinished thinking; it relies on the collection and juxtaposition of found entities. It is a back and forth of thinking, of imagining, pinning up, moving toward and away, and across side to side, collagegrids thinking happens through these materials of coloured papers, with cut lattice, ground and found additions, in layering deposit by deposit each discrete area, each panel, and in bridging gaps between each in a rhythmic continuum of movement. Action leading thinking, thinking leading action; material leading idea, idea material, in mutual reciprocity, until the boundaries between one and other eventually dissolve in a compound of correlations and simultaneous sequential of practice.

1. The thinking that constitutes collagegrids is contingent, composite and inclusive, open to that which is aligned with personal concerns and projects. Fig. 1. *Volume One* p. 147.¹⁰⁰



¹⁰⁰ Image: author's own

Documented in the journal pages of preliminary studies and exercises, walking, drawing and exhibition visits, in the editing of journals and the collection of images presented by Volume One, is the thinking of practice. This can be traced in both writing and photographs, and in the relationship set up between them. It is generated by and emerges in a cumulative process, which increases in complexity with successive additions, layers, links, connections and associations of practice which unfolds in the present, in the movement of its making.

Unfolding in the present, thinking is subject to unexpected and unforeseen events, events that if they were to happen a day later or at a different time, would be completely different. Material is drawn from such unexpected 'found' events, made from a collection of bits and pieces, of sensing, seeing, feeling and touch, scent and sound, stuff gathered in the events of the day. Found events include those when out walking, the intensity of the storm and rain, the summer heat, ambient sound, movement and colour, all apparent in the immediacy of the lived present.

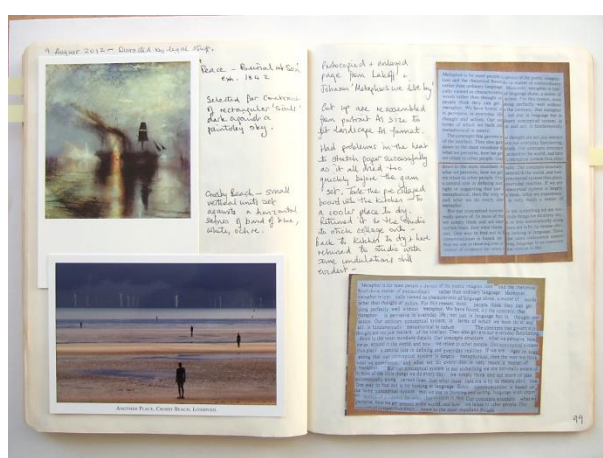
The composite character of this thinking runs through the work, and is evident in the multiple panel yet single artwork p. 27, the journals comprising of collections of news cuttings, tickets, together with photographs, notes and annotations, which put together with photographs of the emerging artwork in its different states construct a single account, and in the collage grids composition.

This way of thinking pays attention to this non-linguistic contingent experience and attempts to bring it into the working process through making correlations with other found materials; the summer storm and rain event p. 30 with Kauffman's *Poetics of Dérive*, p. 31 and 37, ambient sound, *Surrogate Cities*, white paint, white noise p. 33, cloud forms and metaphor p. 39, all chance acts whose results are not exactly planned or known in advance. It is a combination of non-linguistic and linguistic experience, put together in a multitude of small decisions which culminate to make up the process.

These decisions have to be made by someone, in this instance the artist, where they are subject to individual choice based on personal concerns. These include the project of bringing together, of colour and sound, movement and form, structuring the partial, which

is additive, inclusive, overlapping, linking and connecting, associating, and difference, all of which are enabled or constrained by the environment. Constraints include such events as the overheated studio p. 119, inks cooking, and stretched paper drying too quickly, dark winter afternoons and low light levels p. 138-139, 140-141. Enablements, chance correlations of reading and walking, an action or noticing triggering the remembering of past events, bringing them into the present, reading and making, key exhibitions occurring during the course of the project, beneficial timing of the University Gallery Show, NAFAE Symposium and the JVAP paper. Enabled or constrained, the artist is ultimately the decision- maker, activator, practioner.

2. Arising from juxtaposition, thinking is non-linear. Fig. 2. *Volume One* p. 34.¹⁰¹



‘Bringing together’ is central to the collage grids process; it is a key principle and fundamental activity. Gathering, collecting, assembling, linking, connecting and associating all entail a process of putting together, making, combining and producing, which here is manifested in juxtaposition. Setting side by side, is evident in overlapping and abutting, in jumps and edges, as well as in smudging, in arrays, as well as runs, bridges and passages, in the drawn on photograph on p7, the studio wall of artwork p. 59, the papers laid out in front of me p86, in their assembly p96, and non-sequential placing p. 135.

¹⁰¹ Image: author’s own.

Dealing in area and non-linearity, (in addition to line), deals with multiple rather than single trajectory, with simultaneity, in patterns and constellations which can be seen in any direction and at any speed. Not a step by step process, but a different non-sequential ordering system.

3. It is partial and fragmentary. Fig. 3. *Volume One* p. 96.¹⁰²



Not partial as in biased, but referring to the state of existing in part, or parts, thinking is formed from bits and pieces of things. In extracts or quotes, found and collected material is moved from its original context, and remaining incomplete even as it is assembled, where it retains its character and identity. The cut modules of p. 18, the array of material of p. 19, consist of small and disconnected parts, broken areas of colour, offset and uneven construction of lattices p. 175, modules p. 175 and pieces p. 179.

Other things are come across and found, such as things that come to mind, reference to others, particularly artists' writing and artwork, where it is not the whole event but partial in-sights and disconnected bits of things re-membered, where bits and pieces of past events are put together in and with the present. Reference to Itten's colour theory p. 50, Riley's cut coloured papers, Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* p. 85, Pat Steir's drawing after Ensor, Hokusai, Moss and the rain event of p. 54-55, and the *dérive* and walks round London of p. 31. Connections are made between incomplete fragments of entities or partial concerns.

¹⁰² Image: author's own.

4. **Open to a form of synesthetic interplay of non-verbal, pre-verbal and premonitory**, collagegrids thinking draws on inner physiological contingencies of sensing and feeling. Fig. 4. *Volume One* p. 53.¹⁰³

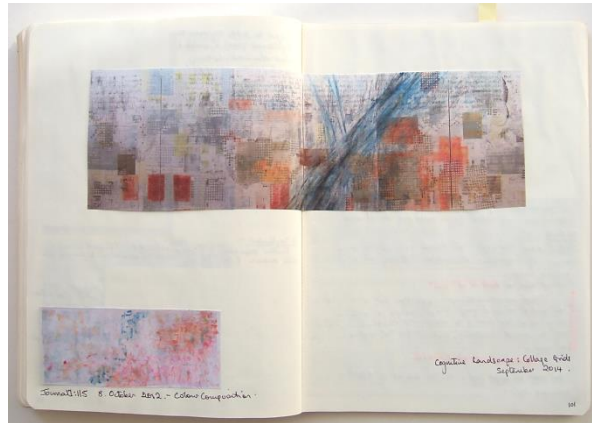


Collagegrids pays attention to and actively engages with non-verbal non-linguistic experience; of particular colour and shape, specific sound and touch, in kinesthetic and synesthetic correlations of bringing together of found material in concrete practice. Work without words, Preliminary study no.1, p. 53.

It deals with immediate lived experience that is yet to be articulated, inner incipient 'gut feeling' responses, prickled skin, pounding rain, muted sound, a chill draught, together with rudimentary notions of something intangible, something yet to happen, possibility p. 91, p. 103. Movement in and across the studio, the impact of colour exercises, engaging with concrete activities handling different weight papers, wet ink, sticky glue, cleaning up, laying out papers to dry, picking them up, reaching to the top of the canvasses, lifting the panels down, in the course of dealing with matter. Partial unfinished sketches and notes point toward something incipient, inchoate, something immediate that is difficult to articulate, p. 41.

¹⁰³ Image: author's own, photograph: Electric Egg.

5. Collagegrids thinking results in emergent composition. Fig. 5. *Volume One* p. 179.¹⁰⁴



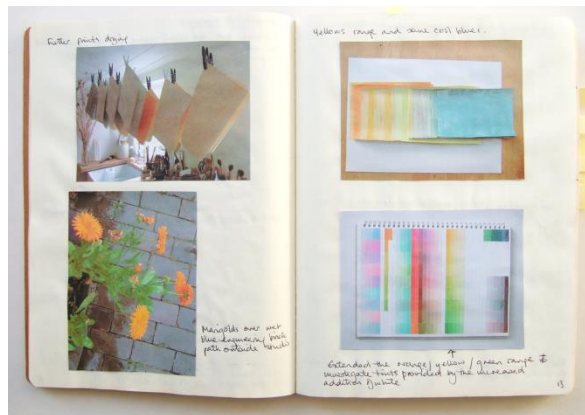
Working on the basis of pre-verbal hunch and gut-feeling often results in small, uncertain sketches, jotted notes, temporary pinnings and reworked areas. In retrospect, it can also offer some surprises, p. 179.

Juxtapositions of bits and pieces, of the fragmentary and partial, the inchoate and remembered, physiological noticing in kinesthetic or synesthetic activity, gives rise to the interplay of overlapping and abutment, of arrays, runs, bridges and passages, in the multitude of individual decisions which culminate to make up emergent composition.

The results of preliminary studies and exercises are viewed in relation to one another, selected bits and parts of which are reworked in different ways, some before, some concurrent with working up the six panels. The emergent composition arises from the interplay of preliminary studies with the panels, of membered and remembered compositions, and of my experience with that of others. The composition is constructed and emerges piece by piece, with each addition dependent on the last, and looking forward to the next. Articulation of this process of composition is the content of Volume One, and can be traced in it.

¹⁰⁴ Image: author's own.

6. This thinking is primarily associative and generative, not deductive, inductive or reductive. Fig. 6. *Volume One* p. 44.¹⁰⁵



Collagegrids is an additive process of assembly, of bringing together and making associations between things, taking into account and retaining difference. Deductive, reductive and inductive are primarily linear forms of thinking, requiring linear ordering of the following domains; theory, hypothesis, observation and findings, following a step by step mode of causation and effect. The logic of association does not follow this route, it is prior. It operates in area rather than line, in simultaneous patterns and constellations, rather than threads or paths. The logic of association brings together, juxtaposes difference of different domains, fields, realms or territories, bringing together in simultaneity. Brought simultaneously into the present, *making* sense occurs through resolving the tensions set up in juxtaposition, by constructing rather than finding links and connections between things.

Association is prior to critique, critique presupposes bringing together. Comparison cannot be made of a single domain. That is a commentary. Association is present in and is the condition of the binary of opposites and polarities, the lattice and the module. Not either/or but both are ultimately utilised in the composition of collagegrids mode of multidimensional/directional construction (dot, line, area and space).

¹⁰⁵ Image: author's own.

7. Not imposed or pre-supposed, the new composition emerges from the interplay of materials with ideas through a reflexive and cumulative decision making process. Fig. 7. *Volume One* p. 174. ¹⁰⁶



Assembly and arrangement is not worked out in advance. It is arrived at through the conditions of practice, of the ongoing and ever developing studio strategies, behaviours and courses of actions. It is emergent through the construction of associations and alignments, links and connections generated from the juxtaposition of found and collected, selected and modified, assembled material.

New composition emerges from the interplay of materials and ideas of colour, of the planned and contingent, of dealing with slippery pigments and qualities of solidity rather than transparency, Itten and Albers ideas of colour interaction and issues of brilliance and recession.

It emerges from correlations of walking and noticing, of clouds and Grids 10, of Dérive, Surrogate Cities, ambient sound, music and painting, ideas of moving through and in space.

It is also evident in the different modes of bringing together; projection, mapping, interplay, of simultaneity, of making associations, constructing links and connections, and ultimately in articulating the mode of bringing together of what is happening on the canvas in concrete material terms with mental operations and the realm of ideas, of cognitive (process) and conceptual(product) structuring and structures.

¹⁰⁶ Image: author's own.

The facilitating mode or mediating role of interplay is the deciding process, the through of practice.

Finally, improvisation is the compressed back and forth movement of interplay, where thinking and action come together at the same time in a mutual exchange which happens without being noticed.

In summary, the thinking that constitutes collage grids is contingent, composite and inclusive, open to that which is aligned with personal concerns and projects. Arising from juxtaposition, thinking is non-linear. It is partial and fragmentary, open to a form of synesthetic interplay of non-verbal, pre-verbal and premonitory, where thinking draws on inner physiological contingencies of sensing and feeling, resulting in a premonitory and emergent composition. This thinking is primarily associative and generative, not deductive, inductive or reductive. Not imposed or pre-supposed, the new composition emerges from the interplay of materials with ideas through a reflexive and cumulative decision making process.

The commentary ‘talks through’ the movement of collage grids practice from preliminary studies, through the different and emerging states of the six panel work, to exhibition. It articulates the complicated mode of construction in the complexity of overlapping personal, theoretical and practical concerns of bringing together, making links and connections, building associations from the partial and fragmentary and from issues as they arise in practice. It identifies tacit knowledge and implied references of practice, those that ‘goes without saying’ and are ‘taken as read’ – including material handling, strategies and techniques, their ordering into processes, and in reference to the work of others as it arises in practice – in reading, on TV or radio, in exhibition and studio visits.

In summary, it has detailed the primary research outcomes and findings of the project. It provides the detached record necessary for identifying concerns and issues, and plays a role in the construction of theory in this research.

Discussion 1a: collage

He spread flour and water over the paper, then moved and shuffled and manipulated his scraps of paper around in the paste while the paper was wet. With his finger-tips he worked little pieces of crumbled paper into the wet surface; also spread tints of watercolour or gouache around to get variations in shadings of tone. In this way he used flour both as paste and as paint. Finally he removed the excess paint with a damp rag, leaving some like an overglaze in places where he wanted to veil or mute a part of the colour.¹⁰⁷

It is a non-writing...You don't even have to think of the words for the collages because they're all lying on the table at the same time....you push them around with your hand until you say to yourself: that's how I want it...And if it turns out to be a fortunate co-incidence then you're satisfied and leave it be, even though you know that had it been a day later or at a different time, everything would have been different.¹⁰⁸

Identified as mutually exclusive or conflicting discourses in the history of art, grids and collage exist in parallel, each having its own discourse, strategy and associations. This discussion utilises contextual study drawn from 20th and 21st century history and theory to explore a field for collage and adopts an 'outsider' approach providing a parallel text which offers insights into the broader field of the practice. It discusses collage in terms of finding and collecting, selecting and modifying, juxtaposition and assembly, in a logic of association, exchange and osmosis, that is contingent and complicated, that constructs the new.

The term collage is commonly used to refer to artwork made out of pieces of paper stuck together with glue. In an expanded field, the term collage is inclusive of montage and assemblage. It is found in film and fashion, music, sound and sonic arts, graphic design, theatre and literature, and the cut 'n' paste world of the digital, and is recognised by its

¹⁰⁷ Charlotte Weidler, from a personal interview with Schwitters, quoted in Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh, *Collage: Personalities, Concepts, Techniques*, Revised edition (Philadelphia, New York, London: Chilton Book Company, 1969), p. 76

¹⁰⁸ Herta Müller in Christiane zu Salm, ed. *Manifesto Collage: Defining Collage in the Twenty-First Century*, (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 2012), p. 174-5.

strategies of collection, selection and modification, where disparate fragments are assembled in a new field. From its beginnings in the material practices of painting, collage introduces everyday 'found' material into the field of painting, where collage refers to the act of transferring materials from one setting to another. It is inclusive of the 'cut' and dissemination of montage and the gathering together that assemblage implies. For this discussion, I use collage as an umbrella term to include montage and assemblage.

The place of collage in art history is hotly contested. From its 'invention' in the painted and cut papers of the early 20th century to the digital world of cut 'n' paste, collage is seen either as quintessentially modern art¹⁰⁹ or is indicative of post-modern and contemporary tendencies.¹¹⁰ Although this theoretical debate lies outside the scope of this project, what is clear is that something is significantly at stake with collage.

While considering the aesthetics of disjuncture created by artists, it is important to bear in mind that works are not necessarily inspired by left-wing politics but can be understood as attempts to criticise dominant cultural assumptions.

¹⁰⁹ Brandon Taylor *Collage: The Making of Modern Art*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004).

¹¹⁰ Blanche Craig, ed. *Collage: Assembling Contemporary Art* (London, UK: Black Dog Publishing, 2008). Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso." in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other Modernist Myths*, by Rosalind Krauss, 23-40 (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 38. Thomas Brockelman, *The Frame and The Mirror: On Collage and the Postmodern* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001). Salm 2012.

Collage and the tradition of painting



Fig. 8. Pablo Picasso, *Guitar*, 1913, Cut-and-pasted newspaper, wallpaper, paper, ink, chalk, charcoal, and pencil on coloured paper, 66.4 x 49.6 cms.¹¹¹

The early papers of Picasso and Braque 1912 -1914 are commonly cited as the first occasions where material textures of wall paper and commercial objects – labels, tobacco wrappings and newspapers- are introduced onto the privileged surfaces of art.¹¹² A composite construction, collage is described in terms of the diverse and unusual materials used, and studied as object. In *Re-ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism 1897 – 1914*, Leighton claims it was Picasso's passion for politics and immersion in the left-wing political environment, first in Barcelona and later in Paris, that led him to include fragments of newspaper cuttings into his drawings and paintings as an act of anarchy. The link between collage and left-wing politics, where 'anarchism came to represent not only revolutionary politics but revolutionary art'¹¹³ was taken up by the Russian Vladimir Tatlin, when on his return from a visit to Picasso in Paris began to include scrap materials in his art. Along with Tatlin, other 'Constructivists', including Rodchenko and Mayakovsky used industrial waste materials in their abstract works. Mayakovsky writes,

¹¹¹ Picasso, 1913, (online Image) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-wiener-and-linda-digusta/shifting-shapes-and-surpr_b_823974.html (accessed 17 August 2016).

¹¹² Patricia Leighton, *Re-Ordering the Universe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

¹¹³ Leighton, p. 15.

Constructivism must become the supreme formal engineering of the whole of life. Constructivism in a performance of shepherd pastorals is nonsense. Our ideas must be developed on the basis of present day things.¹¹⁴

Poggi writes, 'The intrusion of the everyday, non-artistic materials into the domain of high art challenged some of the most fundamental assumptions about painting inherited from both the classical and the more avant-garde traditions'.¹¹⁵ Associated with anarchy and subversion, collage, montage and assemblage are seen as alternatives, *In Defiance of Painting*¹¹⁶, where multiple fragments are assembled under a new law.¹¹⁷

At its inception, collage provided an alternative method, one which, initially at least, was associated with post-pastoral industrial and metropolitan life and revolutionary politics. This project extends the intrusion of the everyday and material into the privileged space of knowledge, to challenge fundamental assumptions and to extend our understanding of the *how* of thinking and as a result, of *how* knowledge is constituted.

Following Robert Motherwell,

The sensation of physicality operating on the world is very strong in the medium of papier collé or collage, in which various kinds of paper are pasted to canvas. One cuts and chooses and shifts and pastes, and sometimes tears off and begins again. In any case, shaping, arranging such a relational structure obliterates the need, and often the awareness of representation. Without reference to likeness, it possesses feeling because all decisions in regard to it are ultimately made on the grounds of feeling.¹¹⁸

The project argues that knowledge is brought about through physically operating in the world, in active engagement over passive reception. Moreover, this engagement is one requiring a decision making process, one premised on appeal to the senses (here understood as in 'common sense', or 'sense' of fair play) and sensitivities that are refined in, through and with practice.

¹¹⁴ Vladimir Mayakovsky, "LEF: 'Whom is LEF Alerting?'" in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 321-323 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p.322.

¹¹⁵ Christine Poggi, "The Pasted-Paper Revolution' Revisited" in *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics*, ed. by Michael Kelly, (New York and Oxford, 1998), p. 387.

¹¹⁶ Christine Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism and the Invention of Collage*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 60.

¹¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, Benjamin, W. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 512-520 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 516.

¹¹⁸ Robert Motherwell cited in David Rosand, "Paint, Paste and Plane." In *Collage*, ed by Jeanine Plottel, (New York: New York Literary Forum, 1983), p.130.

Double status of collage and fluctuating meaning

Analyzing collage from a structuralist historical position, Christine Poggi explores the semiotics of representational signs in Picasso's collages. In her book *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism and the Invention of Collage*, Poggi discusses the 'double status' of the collage elements where 'individual collage elements have been read both as 'real' in the context of painting and drawing and as signs for a reality not physically present'. Poggi writes of collage's 'continually shifting interpretive strategy as well as shifting focus', which leads to an accretion of meanings rather than a once and for all interpretation, where the viewer's attention shifts across the picture surface back and forth between fragments as they appear in their physical positions, and then between this and further references of the fragments prior existence, in an attempt to piece together meaning. Poggi's analysis opens up the possibility of a simultaneous and fluctuating reading of collage, one that requires the contemplation and an actively engaged looking on the part of the viewer, who becomes active in surveying visual relationships between one item and another and between the previous contexts of the fragments, in order to make or construct meaning.

The double status and fluctuating meaning is a condition of collage, one that is taken as read, and often goes without saying in practice. What Poggi touches on here is the sense or condition of fluidity and possibility that collage affords for unfixed discourse, porosity of meaning and polyvalence that is constituent of the making process, where 'lack of certainty' is not conceived as a lack but rather as an openness to possibility in the making process which is subsequently generative of option and choice.

The introduction of papers to the opaque picture plane of painting challenges the fundamental principle of Western Painting since the Renaissance, that the picture is a window onto the world, or onto reality; providing 'an imagined transparency through which an illusion is discerned'. It disrupts the 'figure/ground' spatial relationship of objects in space, in the juxtaposition of 'real' papers, cut out images and partial letters and words, in a 'curiously enigmatic' picture surface. Perloff writes 'for each element in the collage has a dual function: it refers to an external reality even as its compositional thrust is to undercut the very referentiality it seems to assert'.¹¹⁹ Citing Ernst 'It is not the glue which makes the collage', Perloff points out that collage 'always involves the transfer of materials from one

¹¹⁹ Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Movement: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 49.

context to another, where the initial context remains and 'cannot be erased'¹²⁰. In the words of the Group Mu Manifesto,

Each cited element breaks the continuity or the linearity of the discourse and leads necessarily to a double reading: that of the fragment perceived in relation to its text of origin; that of the same fragment as incorporated into a whole, a different totality. The trick of collage consists...of never entirely suppressing the alterity of these elements reunited in a temporary composition.¹²¹

Collage is at once a simultaneous reading of each partial and disparate fragment in relation to their originating context, and of each in relation to the others when incorporated in the new field. The reading fluctuates between each, destabilising any sense or attempt at determination or closure. Meaning fluctuates between external reference to the originating context, and internal reference to new relations set up in the new context, a fluctuation maintained by the heterogeneity of the new field. Simultaneous and fluctuating reading and double meaning are embedded in the fabric of collage, in its material as well as its reading.

Presenting collage as painting (for this project, rather than assemblage, installation or film) challenges the notion of the representational function of art, and picture theory as a 'reduplication of the objects of the world'.¹²² Although collage disrupts the figure/ground relationship it does not reject it but rather reconfigures it, from a fixed space of linear perspective to dynamic heterogeneous space of juxtaposition and overlapping.

Collage, writing and text.

The duality and double status of collage resulting from juxtaposition and overlap extends to the position of writing and text, where words refer to people or places, while the cutting up and fragmenting of newspapers and printed text 'forces us to see them as compositional rather than referential entities'.¹²³ Physically cutting up and reordering printed text engages us actively, alerting us to the materiality of thought and the thinking process as active editing and intervention. In collage grids, partial words and phrases introduced with material are read quotation-like simultaneously with their reading as shape and texture, where the writing provides linear structuring against which its background

¹²⁰ Perloff, 1986, p. 47.

¹²¹ Group Mu cited in Perloff, 1986, p. 47.

¹²² Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press 1981), Preface p. xv.

¹²³ Perloff, 1986, p. 50.

colour can abruptly change. The words and colours, reactivated by the reading audience, results in simultaneous and polyvalent meanings.

Poggi describes Marinetti's 'Words in Freedom' as equivalent to the invention of collage in the visual arts, whereby 'abrupt juxtapositions of images and words torn from their familiar contexts were intended to give rise to unexpected new meanings'. In composing *Zang Tumb Tumb* of 1914, Marinetti cut and pasted together mock-ups of individual sections, so that his creative practice literally came to resemble that of collage'.¹²⁴ Drawing direct parallels with the paper colleges of Picasso, she identifies resemblances and equivalents between their practices, and their discovery that working across traditional disciplines and genres, of synthesizing the possibilities of various media could provide a means of creating new and exciting work.¹²⁵ Transdisciplinary collage is explored in artwork by artist Kurt Schwitters in his Merz project, whose work spans painting, sculpture, assemblage and installation, sound and poetry, performance and publication.¹²⁶

Simultaneity

The double status of collage requires the reading of the collage fragment in its 'found' domain to be considered together with the reading of the fragment as it appears with others in its new context, simultaneously. This is also the case for the juxtaposition of writing together with printed text. The impact of simultaneity and its resulting dissonance creates a compositional tension between the parts.

Although not collage in the formal sense of being composed of cut and stuck papers but inspired by Marinetti's Futurism, Sonia Delaunay's early juxtapositions of colour and text in the poem-painting 'La Prose du Transsiberien et de la Petite Jehanne de France' of 1913 present her notion of 'couleurs simultanes', the simultaneous reading of both painting and poem.

¹²⁴ Poggi, 1992, p. 28.

¹²⁵ The creative uses of fragmentation in art and literature premised on collage is explored by Rona Cran in her recent publication *Collage in 20th Century Art, Literature and Culture: Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, Frank O'Hara and Bob Dylan* (London, New York: Routledge, 2016).

¹²⁶ I return to Schwitters' artwork later in this discussion.



Fig. 9. Sonia Delaunay and Blaise Cendrars, *La Prose du Transsiberien et de la Petite Jehanne de France*, 1913.¹²⁷

Abstract swirls of alternating colours arranged vertically down the page in a column next to the poem's sections printed in alternate colours, invite the viewer to make connections between the coloured areas and the writing. With Robert Delaunay, they derived their theory of 'simultaneism' from Chevreul's treatise 'De la Loi du contraste simultane des couleurs' of 1839, where complementary or opposite colours when juxtaposed causes their interaction, or in Perloff's words 'the dynamic counterpoint of otherwise dissonant colours when observed in complementarity'.¹²⁸ Perloff describes the book 'La Prose du Transsiberien' as a "simultaneous" book in that the reader takes in, or is meant to take in, text and image simultaneously; to read with one glance Delaunay's coloured forms and Cendrars's words, like taking in a billboard poster. The poem painting is also simultaneous in that it 'collapses present and past, the cities and steppes of the Russian orient and the City of the Tower, the Gibbet, and the Wheel, which is Paris'.¹²⁹ Perloff argues that with the advent of transcontinental rail, polar expeditions, and air flight, together with increased availability of the telegraph and telephone, the notion of simultaneity became an increasingly central theme as well as a formal and structural principle. She writes 'to be, figuratively speaking, in two places at once now became a possibility'.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Sonia Delaunay and Blaise Cendrars, 1913 (online image) http://cdn.mhpbooks.com/2013/01/sonia_delaunay_la_prose_du_transsiberien_et_de_la_petite_jehanne_de_france2.jpg (accessed 16 August 2016).

¹²⁸ Perloff, 1986, p. 8.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 9.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 14.

Tension created by simultaneity of the juxtapositions of papers and found material also extends to juxtapositions of areas of colour and text. Delaunay's swirling shapes and abrupt juxtapositions of clear colours inform the reading of the Trans-Siberian rail journey, not to illustrate it, but to provide sharp contrast; the optimistic bright colours contrasting with Cendrars's more sober journey into war. The significance of this juxtaposition, as Perloff points out, is the possibility it presents by bringing together, distant places, distinct spaces, and different times, and their resulting dissonance and creative tension.

Constructing space

Over and above narrative and representational content and freed from a linear perspective, collage deals in a different form of space and its construction. In analogue form it deals in materiality and, through juxtaposition and overlapping of forms, it builds abstract space. Perloff writes of collage's heterogeneous form, 'In its refusal to synthesise disparate forms, Malevich's collage thus emphasizes the artist's dialogue with materiality'.



Fig. 10. Kazimir Malevich, *Woman at the Poster Column*, 1913-14.¹³¹

She cites Malevich's discussion of the form of space that collage constructs,

...a whole series of questions have arisen in connection with the appearance of collage...Examining the surface of the painting from the painterly aspect, from the collage itself, we see how it grows into space like a tower. It stems from the surface

¹³¹ Malevich, 1913-1914, (online image) <http://www.wikiart.org/en/kazimir-malevich/lady-at-the-poster-column-1914> (accessed 17 August 2016)

plane of the canvas which is two dimensional and tone-painted. The collage, however, does not function as a plane. Like the surface, it goes over to three-dimensionality, i.e. has volume, which grows towards us...in real space...This illusion of volume unfolded before our eyes still on the plane of a two-dimensional canvas from the moment of collage, i.e. the growth of the surface towards us in real space; for our part we want to perceive it from all sides, since real volume is created and the picture grows perpendicularly.¹³²

Commenting on how collage acts in the space of painting, Malevich describes a further double status of collage, the physical flatness of the picture plane, together with an implied volume, which in parts appears to project forward from the picture plane into the physical space of the viewer. Arguably in Malevich's collage *Woman at the Poster Column*, it is the two yellow areas that anchor the central set of forms and set them back into the picture plane, by the implied overlapping of the yellow with the black middle left, and that of the yellow over the grey in the lower centre. Freed from any attachment to the edge, the red area upper right floats and can be read as projecting into the viewers space, apparently advancing forward, and appears as relatively closer than the two yellow areas.

Traditional pictorial space is constructed by conceiving of the canvas as a window opening onto the world, where, space recedes from the picture surface and into the depths of the represented world. With collage, picture space is constructed on the canvas ground and 'advances' forward into the space occupied by the viewer, while at the same time being fixed to the surface. This compounds the fluctuating reading of the double status of collage, utilising methods including relative colour, size, scale, shape, positioning on the surface, and relative tonal values of light and dark. Separated from their representational or symbolic function, their abutment and overlapping contribute to a nonlinear mode of spatial construction, providing an alternative to the single viewpoint of linear perspective. Each collage element is selected for its inherent property; its size, shape, colour, tonal value etc. and is placed in the new field in a position *relative* to the properties of all other elements. Through the interplay of dynamic properties, collage constructs and presents a form of three dimensional pictorial space. In Greenberg's words,

Thus every part and plane of the picture keeps ever changing place in relative depth with every other part and plane; and it is as if the only stable relation left among the different parts of the picture is the ambivalent and ambiguous one that each has with the surface,¹³³

¹³² Perloff, 1986, p. 67.

¹³³ Clement Greenberg, 'The Pasted-Paper Revolution' *Art News* 57.5 (1958) 46-49ff

...a process is set up in which every part of the picture takes its turn at occupying every plane, whether real or imagined in it. The imaginary planes are all parallel to one another; their effective connection lies in their common relation to the surface; wherever a form on one plane slants or extends into another it immediately springs forward,¹³⁴

...call(ing) up an association at least, if not a representation, of three dimensional space.¹³⁵

It is through juxtaposition and overlap of abstract forms that prompts or provokes associations to be made between each element, and each element and the surface. However, although relative, elements are not free floating but are connected in/by a relation of simultaneity, that of appearing together, of having in common a shared space and time.

An aesthetics of seamlessness or disjuncture, homogeneity or heterogeneity

Collage is identified by a specific set of processes whereby pre-existing materials are selected, cut and removed from one place and inserted into another, which may include fragments from the same or a different order. The photomontages of John Heartfield consist of solely photographic elements which are cut and juxtaposed. Mixed media works are exemplified by Schwitters' 'Merz'¹³⁶ or Robert Motherwell's early collages of 1940s¹³⁷, where found materials, paper and objects are integrated with painted elements. The hybrid installation of Joseph Kounellis is an example of an assembly where each fragment is drawn from different order. Consisting of a painting, ballerina and violinist, it includes an instance of painting, dance and music in a single work, where elements are drawn from distinctly different forms.

In his essay of 1936 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin writes about how the Dada artists arrived at their use of collage. The effect of rapid juxtaposition of fragmented 'shots' and images created by positioning fragments of images beside one another provided a pictorial and literary means by which they could replicate the effects of film. Recognising the illusory nature of the movie, the result of cutting and editing, Benjamin acknowledges the collage process implicit in filmmaking,

¹³⁴ Clement Greenberg, 'Collage' in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* ed by Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, 105-108 (Paul Chapman and the Open University 1982), p.106.

¹³⁵ Greenberg, p.107.

¹³⁶ *Schwitters in Britain*, exhibition, Tate Britain, London 2013.

¹³⁷ Peggy Guggenheim Exhibition, Robert Motherwell: Early Collages, curated by Susan Davidson, May 26 – September 8, 2013 also accessed <http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/inglese/exhibitions/motherwell/motherwell.html>

where 'multiple fragments (are) assembled under a new law' and moreover, appear to be 'free of all equipment'.¹³⁸ In film, the means and processes of production are so transparent as to appear not to exist and that a visual continuum is created between audience and film which produces an apparent sense of reality. The viewer is transported through suspension of disbelief in the construct, to engage with the seamlessness of the new constructed reality, that is, seamless with their own experience of the world. The collage working method identified in film, is the shooting or recording of images followed by cutting, splicing and editing of filmstrip to create a new order, a new sequence of seamless narrative, which then constructs the story. The story presented by traditional mainstream filmmaking, exemplified by Hollywood Studios and mainstream TV, is constructed in a 'grammar' of seamless transitions, so successfully as to be invisible to the viewer's engagement and enjoyment of the narrative. The viewer is transported into the flowing visual continuum that is the Hollywood construct.¹³⁹

Experimental film, early MTV and music videos present a different story of disjuncture, using the jump cut, rapid and 'ungrammatical' cutting, a 'decoupage classique', rhythmic editing, the match cut (as in the opening shots of *2001: A Space Odyssey*), flash back and flash forward in the construction of a broken or irregular narrative and collage effect imagery. The resulting disjuncture and disruption experienced draws attention to its mode of production.¹⁴⁰ Both the techniques of seamlessness and disjuncture are used in film *Memento* (2000, directed by Christopher Nolan) where passages in colour are interspersed, in reverse temporal order, with shots in black and white. For Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, filmmaking was about collision rather than linkage, 'montage has its aim the creation of ideas, of a new reality, rather than the support of narrative, the old reality of experience',¹⁴¹ where collision produces the strongest emotional response for his propaganda purposes. The 'Odessa Steps' sequence in *Battleship Potemkin* exemplifies this as an ideologically loaded collision.

¹³⁸ Walter Benjamin, 1936, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 512-520 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

¹³⁹ James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, Multimedia*. (Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴⁰ Independent Cinema Office, presents *ICO Essentials: The Secret Masterpieces of Cinema*, screenings of experimental film 'featuring six themed programmes of artists' films, including newly restored classics and influential gems that have blazed a trail through the visual arts, fashion, music and design'. Tate Modern, January 2008. Further information (online) <https://www.artrabbit.com/events/ico-essentials-the-secret-masterpieces-of-cinema> (accessed 22 August 2016).

¹⁴¹ James Monaco, 2000, p. 402.

While considering the aesthetics of disjuncture created by artists, it is important to bear in mind that works are not necessarily inspired by left-wing politics but can be understood as attempts to criticise dominant cultural assumptions. Surrealist artists used collage to provide a vehicle for disrupting accepted orders and hierarchies,¹⁴² providing disjuncture through the overlapping or linking of unrelated material.¹⁴³ Andre Breton describes the practice whereby the 'external object was dislodged from its usual setting. Its separate parts were liberated from their relationships as objects so that they could enter into new combinations with other elements'.¹⁴⁴ Their intentions collated in the 'Declaration of the Bureau de Recherches Surrealistes' stated, 'we make no claim to change the mores of mankind, but we intend to show the fragility of thought, and on what shifting foundations, what caverns we have built our trembling houses'.¹⁴⁵ They identified themes of instability and uncertainty, mistrust of prevailing culture and dominant assumptions; themes which are found in the collages of Dada, surrealist films of Dali and Buñuel, 1970s punk in the fashion of Vivienne Westwood (*Bondage Shirt* 1977) and graphics of Jamie Reid represented by the 1976 *Anarchy in the UK* album cover for the Sex Pistols. Collage is used as tool for critique and a device for criticism. The terms of dis-juncture, non-linear, disruptive, in-stability, un-certainty, mis-trust, are all terms which act against, a negating language acting in opposition to an assumed prevailing norm, where collage dis-mantles rather than replicates, and in the process produces difference.

Different fields (domains)

Bosseur presents a more positive way of thinking about difference created by juxtapositions of collage, by bridging the divisions in a two way movement of bringing together. Writing on sound and the sonic arts, Bosseur discusses collage in terms of exchange or osmosis between different artistic fields, achieved by paying attention to 'zones of intersection', where divisions are overridden by switching from one 'sphere to another' in an attempt at constructing parallel references. He writes 'Collage is more like a juxtaposition, putting things together; they don't have to come from the same media'.¹⁴⁶ By

¹⁴² Possibly the best known is Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's, silent film of 1929, 'Le Chien Andalou'.

¹⁴³ Jemma Montagu, *The Surrealists: Revolutionaries in Art and Writing 1919-1935*. (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), p. 30.

¹⁴⁴ Montagu, p. 35.

¹⁴⁵ Louis Aragon, 1925 "Declaration of the Bureau de Recherches Surrealistes." In *Art in Theory 1900 - 1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 439-430. (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1992), p. 439

¹⁴⁶ Jean-Yves Bosseur, *Sound and The Visual Arts: Intersections between Music and the Visual Arts Today*, (Paris: Dis Voir, 1993).

shifting the mode of 'paying attention' and conceiving differently, results in a different focus for the activity of collage. What was conceived of as separate is brought together, what formally was seen as divisive and dividing can be bridged or made porous, in switching from one domain to the other can construct a movement of mutual exchange.

Collage as discursive formulation

An account of interdisciplinary collage is provided by J. R. Green who argues 'In Maximising Indeterminacy: On Collage and Writing, Film, Video, Installation and other Artistic Realms', for collage as 'discursive formulation'; referring to 'the linguistic practices and institutions that produce...knowledge claims', usually co-relatable with a disseminating power, within which we exist socially' which raises questions of power and social relations; of who is doing the organising, in what way, why and for whom? but also as 'working method', 'formal method' or mode of working, making the world increasingly legible and as a result more 'writerly...physically segmentable, composable, revisable and re-readable'.¹⁴⁷ In this way the world becomes gradually transformed into a 'series of non-linear opportunities' dominated by sound, motion and space: 'an expanded landscape of moving images, audio alternatives and the insistently transformative internet'¹⁴⁸ which require new discursive practices.

Collage as critical device

Further to Green's discursive formulations, Ulmer proposes collage as critical device, which provides 'an alternative to the organic model of growth and its classical assumptions of harmony, unity, linearity, closure'.¹⁴⁹ Making the distinction between collage and montage, Ulmer refers to the former as the transfer of materials from one setting to another while 'montage' is the dissemination of these appropriations into another context, where 'Montage does not reproduce the real but constructs an object'. He describes collage's relation to reality as a conscious act of construction, one that intervenes in the world, 'not to reflect but to change reality' or the modes by which 'reality' is represented.¹⁵⁰ In this sense, collage provides an alternative view of reality, from the reproduction of representation to one that is constructed, and moreover, constructed in such a way as to be inherently unstable and uncertain. Where meaning is seen as neither

¹⁴⁷ J. R. Green, "Maximising Indeterminacy: On Collage in Writing, Film, Video Installation and other artistic realms (as well as the Shroud of Turin)" *Afterimage* May/June Issue 6, (2000).

¹⁴⁸ Richard Flood, R. "Tear Me Apart, One Letter at a Time." in *Collage: The Unmonumental Picture*, ed by Laura Hoptman, 8-9. London and New York: Merrell, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Gregory Ulmer, "The Object of Post-Criticism." in *Postmodern Culture*, ed by Hal Foster, (London and Concord: Pluto Press, 1983), p. 84.

¹⁵⁰ Ulmer, p. 86.

universal nor fixed, it has to be 'fathomed afresh with each new configuration of context'... 'It is the relationships between contiguous symbols, signifiers and motifs that determine our understanding over and above a fixed a priori reality'¹⁵¹ and serves to release collage as critical device from any particular belief or ideology. Collage provides the means by which dissimiliars are linked, and in such a way as to 'shock' people into new recognitions and understandings,¹⁵² where 'images are edited, manipulated, scrambled and reassembled to serve a multiplicity of motives'.¹⁵³

Recognising the interdisciplinarity of collage, Ulmer proposes collage or the 'collage paradigm' as principle method and device to be taken over by critics and theorists in directing representations in a variety of arts and media, including literary criticism.¹⁵⁴ Quoting from *Group Mu*, Ulmer asserts 'the art of collage proves to be one of the most effective strategies in the putting into question of all the illusions of representation'.¹⁵⁵



Fig. 11. Martha Rosler, *Photo Op* From the series *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, new series 2004.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Sally O'Reilly 'Collage: Diversions, Contradictions and Anomalies' in *Collage: Assembling Contemporary Art*. ed. by Blanche Craig, 8-19 (London, UK: Black Dog Publishing, 2008), p. 19.

¹⁵² Stanley Mitchell, Introduction to *Understanding Brecht*, by Walter Benjamin, Trans. Anna Bostock, (London and New York: Verso, 2003), p. xiii.

¹⁵³ O'Reilly, 2008, p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ Ulmer, 1983, p. 84.

¹⁵⁵ Group Mu in Ulmer 1983, p. 88.

¹⁵⁶ Rosler, 2004, (online image) <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/level-2-gallery-media-burn/level-2-gallery-media-burn-martha-rosler> (accessed 17 August 2016)



Fig. 12. Josephine Meckseper, *Selling Out* 2004.¹⁵⁷

Film critic and artist Hito Steyerl and the political philosopher Jacques Rancière both deploy collage as a critical tool. They bring collage and politics together as a means of critical reflection 'giving art an integral role... in the task of unmasking the machineries of the global world'.¹⁵⁸ Reflecting on the aesthetics of collage by Martha Rosler and Josephine Meckseper¹⁵⁹ Rancière observes the use of the two distinct uses of collage, one which 'chooses to play on the shock of heterogeneousness if not contradictory elements', recognising this aesthetic was often implemented in the past as a means of producing 'political consciousness', and the other which constructs a seamless homogeneity, which questions the politics of power.

¹⁵⁷ Meckseper, 2004, (online image) <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/level-2-gallery-media-burn/level-2-gallery-media-burn-josephine> (accessed 17 August 2016)

¹⁵⁸ Jacques Rancière, "Misadventures of Universality: Symposium on Philosophy." *The Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art*. 2007. (online) http://2nd.moscowbiennale.ru/en/ranciere_report_en/ (accessed 20 June 2007)

¹⁵⁹ Both Rosler and Meckseper featured in the exhibition *Media Burn*, Tate Modern 2007.



Fig. 13. Hito Steyerl, *Poster for the documentary Showdown in Seattle: Five days that shook the WTO*, 1999.¹⁶⁰



Fig. 14. Hito Steyerl, *Ici et Ailleurs*, 1975.¹⁶¹

Hito Steyerl applies the film theory of montage and film cuts to global politics. In 'The Articulation of Protest' she identifies the constituents of 'political' collage,

Every articulation is a montage of various elements – voices, images, colors, passions or dogmas – within a certain period of time and with a certain expanse in space...¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Steyerl, 1999, (online image) <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Film/ShowdownInSeattle> (accessed 17 August 2016)

¹⁶¹ Steyerl, 1975, (online image) <http://www.olivefilms.com/films/ici-et-ailleurs-here-and-elsewhere/> (accessed 17 August 2016)

Steyerl continues, showing just how such a collage functions through different levels of decision making,

Naturally, protest movements are articulated at many levels: at the level of their programs, demands, self-obligations, manifestos and actions. This also involves montage - in the form of inclusions and exclusions based on subject matter, priorities and blind spots. In addition, though, protest movements are also articulated as concatenations or conjunctions of different interest groups, NGOs, political parties, associations, individuals or groups. Alliances, coalitions, fractions, feuds or even indifference are articulated in this structure. At the political level as well, there is also a form of montage, combinations of interests, organized in a grammar of the political that reinvents itself again and again. At this level, articulation designates the form of the internal organization of protest movements.' and asks 'according to which rules, though, is this montage organised? Who does it organise, with whom, through whom and in which way?'¹⁶³

Deploying collage as critical tool implies approaching the subject from a position of practical engagement and active participation which raises questions of decision-making, and how decisions are made.

Collage, the postmodern and questions of representation.

The question of what collage offers to philosophical issues surrounding representation is taken up by Brockelman. Offering collage as lens for the interpretation of the postmodern, he draws on structuralist and post-structuralist writing and proposes that it is exactly the undecidability of its representational status that makes collage an emblem for contemporary culture.¹⁶⁴ He positions postmodernism not in the postwar period or the 1970's after modernism, but with the advent of collage in the early 20th century. This positioning questions 'postmodernism' as historical concept and complicates ideas of Modernism itself, which he considers 'a kind of failed response to those material and philosophical conditions that developed with industrialization and urbanization in the middle of the last century'. He writes, 'the other response is ...collage'.

If postmodernism grows at the very birth of modernism, then perhaps its increasing importance does not bode the demise of modernity at all, but rather a kind of transformation of it from within. With collage, we have a postmodern intertwined

¹⁶² Steyerl, (2002), (online) <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0303/steyerl/en> (accessed 5 July 2016)

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Brockelman, *The Frame and The Mirror: On Collage and the Postmodern*. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), p. 7.

with the modern, a postmodern as crisis of the modern announced from within modernity.¹⁶⁵

The crisis Brockelman refers to is the philosophical issue of representation. It is the problematic matter of the double status of collage, the undecidability of its status, resisting polemicism by being both, rather than either/or and holding together opposites in a heterogeneous irreducible field. Drawing on Poggi's analysis of the complexity of the collage phenomenon; where the modernist world of pure cognitive and linguistic mediation operates simultaneously with what he calls the antirepresentational, he argues that collage demands that attention be paid to the way in which the mediation is constructed. On this simultaneity, Brockelman writes 'It is uncomfortable to deny the modernist language of immediacy and at the same time assert a simplified post-structuralist vision of a decentered play of language, one which, ironically, seems to assert an immediacy of the signifier'¹⁶⁶, as in the decentered play of language there is no completion in a signifier, meaning is suspended, and there is no closure. He writes 'collage demands a view of postmodernism that resists polemicism'¹⁶⁷ which is to say that it is not reducible to a kind of aesthetic play that tells us nothing about us and our world. He argues that there is a kind of truth to collage, one that depends on a new kind of relationship which promises a new sense of truth and experience, potentially revolutionizing both epistemology and aesthetics. Brockelman proposes collage as model for postmodernism as one which represents this paradox.

It is not the aim of this project to argue for a positioning of collage, either within modernism or postmodernism as this is addressed by others. What Brockelman does raise are the philosophical difficulties that collage raises for art's appeal to truth, and for the traditional understanding of truth and meaning. This PhD project investigates how meaning does not break down but continues to function when the individual crosses traditional boundaries between worlds, and it pays attention to the way in which that mediation functions and new space and new world is constructed.

Schwitters and Merz

The collage artist Kurt Schwitters invented Merz with the aim to construct a new artistic order out of the debris of the First World War; his method, the inclusion of found

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 7.

¹⁶⁷ Brockelman, 2001, p. 8.

materials in his art work. The name Merz derives from a linguistic fragment of the partially obscured word Kommerz in one of his collage pictures.



Fig. 15. Kurt Schwitters, *Picture with Light Center*, 1919.¹⁶⁸

Well known to his European artist and architect contemporaries, who included Kandinsky, Feininger, Mies Van der Rohe and Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus, Schwitters was also well known to Richard Huelsenbeck, he was in contact with Tristan Tsara in Zurich, and with the Berlin Dadaists, who refused him membership. He was also well known to the American Alfred Barr and was represented in his pivotal 1936 exhibition, *Cubism and Abstract Art* in New York. Like many of his contemporaries, Schwitters outlined his ideas in the First Merz manifesto of 1919,¹⁶⁹ which he published alongside other writings in his Merz magazine. In spite of this it is only in recent times that Schwitters and his work has been paid close attention.

Creating his own form of Dada in Hanover in 1918, Schwitters used rubbish materials such as labels, bus tickets and bits of broken wood in his collages and constructions, and extended his collage concept to include poetry, prose and dramatic performance. 'Merz' he wrote, 'denotes essentially the combination of all conceivable materials for artistic

¹⁶⁸ Schwitters, 1919, (online) <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/33235> (accessed 17 August 2016)

¹⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that this is not included in Harrison and Wood's *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, where Schwitters has just 3 entries.

purposes, and technically the principle of equal evaluation of all the individual materials'.¹⁷⁰ Although Schwitters continued to paint in the traditional manner alongside his collage working, his Merz was abstract in conception, focusing on an inclusive non-hierarchical selection from his collection of 'junk' materials and their subsequent inclusion and arrangement within his pictures. He neatly summarises his Merz collage principle,

Merzmalerei (Merz painting) makes use not only of paint and canvas, brush and palette, but of all materials perceptible to the eye and of all required implements. Moreover, it is unimportant whether or not the material was already formed for some purpose or other... The artist creates through choice, distribution and metamorphosis of materials.¹⁷¹

His collection of materials from the streets and his locality is well documented.¹⁷² He clarifies his working principle in terms of a series of necessary active decisions regarding materials, their selection, their arrangement and their transformation in making the new composition.¹⁷³

Hulsenbeck writes, 'a new reality comes into its own. Life appears as a simultaneous muddle of noises, colours and spiritual rhythms, which have been taken unmodified into Dadaist art...Dada for the first time ceased to take an aesthetic attitude toward life, and this it establishes by tearing all....into their components',¹⁷⁴ in a searing critique of German culture. It is the politicized often vitriolic attack on German life and culture that is so evident in Dada, exemplified by photomontages of John Heartfield and Georg Grosz. In his essay of 1936 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production', Walter Benjamin wrote of where the original ceases to be important, 'the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual it begins to be based on another practice, politics'.¹⁷⁵ To clarify the distinction between Dada and Merz, Schwitters writes,

I compared Dadaism in its most serious form with Merz, and came to this conclusion: whereas Dada merely poses antithesis, Merz reconciles antithesis by assigning relative values to every element in the work of art. Merz is art, pure Dadaism is non-art; in both cases deliberately so.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁰ Dietrich, 1995, p. 17.

¹⁷¹ Dietrich, 1995, p. 17.

¹⁷² Elderfield, 1985, Webster, 2007.

¹⁷³ Dietrich, 1995

¹⁷⁴ Hulsenbeck, First German Dada manifesto, 1917, in Harrison and Wood, 1992, p. 255.

¹⁷⁵ Walter Benjamin, 1936, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production' in Harrison and Wood, 1992 p. 512.

¹⁷⁶ Dietrich, 1995, p. 129.

It is this understanding of the artist who creates through choice, distribution and metamorphosis of materials, through a series of necessary active decisions, to reconcile antithesis through deliberately inclusive, non-hierarchical selection and arrangement that is the collage grids project too.

Where Dada concerns itself with destruction and breaking apart the established order, for Schwitters, the destruction of war provides the fragments to be gathered and used, with emphasis on the transformative value of bringing the fragmented and discarded together with, and given equal consideration to, traditional materials. Notwithstanding his Dada contemporaries' rejection of the old order of making art, Schwitters continued to call his pictures paintings, introducing into his painting the debris and rubble from his everyday post war local environment. He wrote 'The whole place was in ruins, and the thing was to take the rubble and build something new. That's all Merz is about'.¹⁷⁷ By using fragments, bits and pieces taken from the everyday, Schwitters worked in an apparently similar manner to his Dada contemporaries, but unlike their call for subversion and dissent, Schwitters looked to make something new, to construct, out of the war torn debris. Introducing pre used material into his paintings; Schwitters recognized their potential in the new kind of forms it created, 'Merz means establishing relationships, best of all between all things in the world'. It was to investigate these kinds of relationships, between old and new, between different orders of things, between painting and collage, words and actions that Schwitters engaged with in his Merz works and Merzbau constructions.¹⁷⁸ These too describe the interrogation of collage grids by the research project, and articulation of the transformative process inherent in bringing together.

Arguably, the structure Schwitters first deployed as organizing device in his Merz constructions was that found in the fractured space of Cubism and in the Expressionist ideal form of the crystalline structure. Dietrich writes that while adopting collage as an anti-traditional medium, Schwitters' vision remained firmly embedded in German artistic tradition.¹⁷⁹ Intersecting diagonals and fractured lighting, the sharply pointed triangular forms with contrasting curves can be readily observed from the earlier composition and arrangement of found materials and paint, and later in the Merzbau constructions.

¹⁷⁷ Dietrich, 1995, p. 19.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 50.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 47.



Fig. 16. Pablo Picasso, *Ma Jolie*, 1911-12,¹⁸⁰ Fig. 17. Lyonel Feininger *Cathedral* for Bauhaus, 1919,¹⁸¹ and Fig. 18. *Benz VI* 1914,¹⁸² Fig. 19. Schwitters *Radiating World Merzbild 31B*, 1920.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Picasso 1912, (online image) https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/pablo-picasso-ma-jolie-paris-winter-1911-12 (accessed 27 May 2014)

¹⁸¹ Feininger 1919, (online image) https://www.moma.org/collection_ge/object.php?object_id=63072 (accessed 27 May 2014)



Top, Fig. 20. Still from 1920 German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*,¹⁸⁴ Fig. 21. Rudulf Belling *Abstrakte Konstruktion*, n.d.¹⁸⁵ middle, Fig. 22. Interior of Scala Restaurant

¹⁸² Feininger 1914 (online image)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lyonel_Feininger,_1914,_Benz_VI,_oil_on_canvas,_100_x_125_cm_\(39.3_x_49.2_in\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lyonel_Feininger,_1914,_Benz_VI,_oil_on_canvas,_100_x_125_cm_(39.3_x_49.2_in).jpg) (accessed 27 May 2014)

¹⁸³ Schwitters, 1920, (online image)

¹⁸⁴ Still from 1920 German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, (online image)

<http://screenprism.com/insights/article/why-is-the-cabinet-of-dr.-caligari-considered-the-definitive-german-express> (accessed 21 August 2016)

¹⁸⁵ Belling, (online image) [http://i.ebayimg.com/t/Rudolf-Belling-Abstrakte-Konstruktion-Original-Lithographie-100-Expl-/00/s/OTQ4WDcxNA==/z/QMsAAOxyfS1R3-fG/\\$T2eC16dHJGYFFk6LE,iMBR3-fFjqVw~~60_35.JPG](http://i.ebayimg.com/t/Rudolf-Belling-Abstrakte-Konstruktion-Original-Lithographie-100-Expl-/00/s/OTQ4WDcxNA==/z/QMsAAOxyfS1R3-fG/$T2eC16dHJGYFFk6LE,iMBR3-fFjqVw~~60_35.JPG) (accessed 21 August 2016)

Berlin, 1921,¹⁸⁶ Fig. 23. Kurt Schwitters *Spring Picture*,¹⁸⁷ and below, Fig. 24, 25 and 26. Three images of Hanover *Merzbau of 1930s*.¹⁸⁸

In 'The Merzbau and Expressionist Architecture', Dietmar Elger argues that what Schwitters did with his other found materials he also did with current aesthetic or stylistic fashion. Incorporating the diagonal aesthetic of the 1920 Expressionist film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, together with the crystalline structure of utopian Expressionist architecture Elger suggests that he built himself a quite separate world; 'Here the world became amenable to his rule and could be ordered and manipulated to his heart's content in accordance with the rules that he had drawn up himself'.¹⁸⁹ This was potentially a politically dangerous decision for Schwitters, since for the dominant National Socialists 'deviation from the upright is to be understood in both the literal and metaphorical sense'.¹⁹⁰

Whether intersecting shafts or more regular rectangular forms, a clear sense of order and deliberate ordering can be observed in Schwitters' Merz compositions. His later collages show evidence of rectilinear construction, of verticals and horizontals in contrast to the Expressionist diagonals.

¹⁸⁶ The casino dance floor of the Scala restaurant in Berlin (1921-22), (online image) <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/0e/2b/fd/0e2bf4dc6f4a1ebb72245fa85faca799d.jpg> (accessed 21 August 2016)

¹⁸⁷ Schwitters, 1920, (online Image) <http://www.seeyou.altervista.org/Corpo/On%20This%20Site/Arte/Arte/Schwitters%20Kurt/Spring%20picture.htm> (accessed 27 May 2014)

¹⁸⁸ Schwitters, (online images) http://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/07/09/in-search-of-lost-art-kurt-schwitterss-merzbau

¹⁸⁹ Notz and Obrist, 2007, p. 32.

¹⁹⁰ Notz and Obrist, 2007, p. 48.



Fig. 27. Kurt Schwitters, *Mz 601*, 1923, paint and paper on cardboard, 17 × 15 in.¹⁹¹



Fig. 28. Kurt Schwitters, *Untitled (Katan or 703)*, c. 1921, Fabric and paper collage on paper, 15 x 12.1 cms (5 7/8 x 4 3/4 ins).¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Schwitters, 1923, (online) <http://dailyserving.com/2011/08/kurt-schwitters-color-and-collage-at-the-berkeley-art-museum/> (accessed 17 August 2016)



Fig. 29. Kurt Schwitters, Merzbild 32A, The Cherry Picture, 1921¹⁹³

While Dietrich writes at length on Merz and Expressionism, with some concluding remarks on the importance Schwitters ascribes to play as creative activity capable of generating constructive transformation,¹⁹⁴ she does not explore the subject of Merz and the Modernist grid.

In a later chapter on 'Political Inscription', Dietrich writes on political consequences of Schwitters transformation as nothing less than the reshaping of history; arguing that because the individual fragments as found and reconstituted are carriers of history, the process of transformation, one of turning the debris into form, provides a model of positive change.

So far, this discussion on collage has raised issues resulting from the intrusion into the privileged domain of high art of everyday, non-artistic materials, including the double status of collage resulting in a fluctuating and polyvalent reading or meaning and subsequent lack of closure. It addresses the heterogeneity of the juxtaposition of distinct disparate forms,

¹⁹² Schwitters, 1921, (online) KS13771 accessed from <http://abstractcritical.com/note/kurt-schwitters-collages-and-assemblages-1920-1947/> (accessed 17 August 2016)

¹⁹³ Schwitters 1921, (online image) http://www.moma.org/wp/moma_learning/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Schwitters.-Merz-Picture-32A-313x395.jpg (accessed 17 August 2016)

¹⁹⁴ Dietrich, 1995, p. 69.

the dialogue with materiality and the construction of non-linear space, and collage's potential as zones of intersection, exchange and porosity of meaning. It presents collage as discursive formulation and critical tool and its questioning of the nature of representation and ultimately, truth.

On Processing the Complicated Order

This section takes its name from *Merzworld: Processing the Complicated Order*, and reflects on ideas and themes raised by Adrian Notz and Hans Ulrich Obrist, in particular that of Schwitters constructive decision making, and the irreducibility of 'processing the complicated order'. Notz and Obrist consider Schwitters' Merz collagework as creative device but this time in terms of understanding and responding to the contemporary world. *Merz World* was published on the occasion of the first Symposium Merzbau, 'Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Potential'.¹⁹⁵ Notz proposes Schwitters' Hanover Merzbau, 1923 to 1936, as a device for contemporary practices and their developments, to 'trigger' new perspectives for artists and architects in dealing with contemporary complexity. Obrist proposes Merzbau as a paradigm of interior complexity, picking up on its incompleteness, as something that, in Schwitters' oeuvre of constructions, in Hanover, Norway and later in England was continually left incomplete. Schwitters writes, 'it is unfinished and out of principle'... 'it grows according to the principles of the big city', ever changing, with the central principle of collage remaining constant in the work.¹⁹⁶ Obrist notes that collage can always be added to; there is no final point of completion beyond the decision to stop. This open ended process is one of inclusion and addition, of continual modification, alteration and change.

Stefano Boeri proposes 'The Merzbau as Spatial Device', a device in the structural sense, as tool for thinking with. Following Boeri, the Merzbau tool is one that accommodates great complexity and multiplicity and is accepting of variation and addition, and is defined in terms of world building: of 'The capacity of governing, attracting, and proposing a world within a single, unique object', and uncertainty: 'incomplete determination... the notion of complexity', and 'breaking the scales'. He qualifies his term spatial device, to mean a structural tool capable of transforming the way we think and opening up new possibilities.

¹⁹⁵ The first Symposium Merzbau, 'Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Potential', Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich, 2005.

¹⁹⁶ Notz and Obrist, 2007, p. 10.

For Boeri what is most important is its capacity to generate and to produce new ideas. This significant aspect of collage is central to this discussion on collage.¹⁹⁷

Writing on Merzbau as Gesamtkunstwerk, or 'total work of art', Webster makes a clear contrast with the dogmatic and ideologically commanding Gesamtkunstwerk of Wagner. She conceives of Merzbau as an example of *Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk*¹⁹⁸ as 'Tendencies toward the Total Work of Art', in the more positive sense of a 'poetic zone of thought constructions' that becomes increasingly inclusive as it develops.¹⁹⁹ She draws our attention to Aby Warburg's library structure, 'Denkraum' which she translates roughly to mean 'thought space', 'a kind of buffer zone in which the human being translates the demands of the world into comprehensible forms and gestures – as a personal space of contemplation that houses the processes of interpretation'.²⁰⁰ Important to this concept is its ever changing order, which is not static but dynamic in conception, and for Warburg's library meant that a book added would change the order of that section, and result in a new emphasis. Webster proposes Schwitters' studio as spatial Denkraum, piled high with junk and discarded material, 'an indeterminate thought space between himself and a threatening world...'²⁰¹

Webster writes about Schwitters extended collage work which embraced prose, poetry, sculpture, drama, architecture and his own magazine. The outcome, she describes as an 'intermediary art', 'where objects situated in one practice are open to interpretation in another'. The art becomes the system which is practiced across disciplines. Although the different categories are maintained, what is happening within them follows the same method. The art becomes the process, whose outcomes are visually different in each discipline. What is apparent though, are the non-sequential jumps and surprising juxtapositions that this process engenders. In this way, the non-linear collage process of Schwitters' Merzbau becomes a transdisciplinary system and method.

In her essay 'The House is Past', Karin Orchard writes of the Merzbau as a mind structure, flexible, not fixed in time or space. She proposes Schwitters' Merzbauten collectively as a continuation of the same project, albeit in different times and locations, restarted over and

¹⁹⁷ In Symposium Merzbau 2011, Tomas Saraceno pursues the idea of Merzbau further, he writes of transferring this device to our own environment, **rendering reality more complex** and opening up possibilities for the future.

¹⁹⁸ Webster in Notz and Obrist, p. 69.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 70.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 65.

²⁰¹ Ibid. p. 66.

over again. She suggests that it functions as a time capsule and space capsule inside which Schwitters' private feelings and historical events can be repeatedly re-adjusted to the temporal dimensions of past and present and in changes in place. In this sense, the Merzbau becomes an external manifestation of Schwitters' thinking which is acted out in each time and location. It does not reflect the form of Schwitters thinking, but rather suggests that it is the process of thinking itself. She writes that Schwitters is the 'live component of his constructions'.²⁰² In a later essay, Yona Friedman elaborates on this, 'when I am speaking about process I am always thinking about the human actor in it' and it is this that makes the process continuous. He says 'it is not simply interaction. It is an ongoing process, an endless process', and does not speak of works of art but of processes of art. Two points are significant, first is that collage is conceived of as the external manifestation of thinking, not mirroring thinking but *is* thinking and second, is Friedman's identification of the human factor as key to the continuation of the process.

Friedman interprets the 'Merz Principle' as 'a (seemingly) random agglomeration of things that form a whole', a principle of which he sees in everything. Based on the premise that reality is not made up of isolated facts but of processes, and not in parts but the process as a whole, processes can be described only and exclusively by their history, by linear presentation, in a sequential description. For Friedman, complexity, even extreme complexity, is the result of direct relations between finite number of elements, producing a finite complexity. On the other hand, the complicated order is one where there are finite elements but an infinite possible complicated order. A characteristic of the complicated order is that it cannot be made into an abridged form, as, for example, in a mathematical formula. He reflects that the most an artist can do is to trigger a process, which others, other workers or the public takes up and completes. 'We know that the public completes the work of art with its associations', and that Gesamtkunstwerk means that in a non-totalitarian way, the work is completed by the public.²⁰³

Dealing with contemporary issues of complexity, uncertainty and unfinished thinking, Notz and Obrist present the collage Merz process of Schwitters in terms of transdisciplinary system and method, and Merzbau as external manifestation of thinking, the process of thinking itself acted out in a specific time and place. The non-linear system becomes linear when constructed as historical account. It is the thinking process, not product, which is completed by the viewing public.

²⁰² Notz and Obrist, 2007, p. 82.

²⁰³ Ibid. p. 109.

In contrast to the vitriolic tearing apart of culture and history by Dada, Schwitters brought about his change through the reconciliation of antithesis, through a deliberately inclusive, non-hierarchical transformative means. Schwitters recognised potential of pre-used materials in the new forms and relationships they created together. Increasingly complex and unfinished out of principle, a buffer zone of transformative practices, intermediary, mind structure and indeterminate thought space, a generative process of infinite possibility, Notz and Obrist present Schwitters' Merz as a constructive means of configuring the world, with the potential to transform the way we think. Although discussed in terms of diagonals of Expressionism, Schwitters collages also show evidence of a rectilinear construction, of verticals and horizontals; no one has explored Schwitters' use of the grid form.

Collage and Colour

Writing on collage and painting inevitably brings to the fore interactions between the local colour of found material and the addition of applied paint. Paying attention to collage's 'defiance of painting' historians have focused on the 'revolutionary' and 'pioneering' use of materials by artists and their desire to break from traditional art forms. Recent studies have shown that for artists such as Kurt Schwitters painting and collage were not mutually exclusive, but rather formed an integrated whole.²⁰⁴ Isabel Schultz argues that where earlier historians disregarded Schwitters painterly achievements as of little consequence, focusing on the artist's use of found materials as 'tantamount to an escape from painting' where 'the less painting involved in the works, the greater their chance of success',²⁰⁵ she asserts 'although the medium called into question the primacy of painting, Schwitters never stopped thinking about painting as central to his work'. Rather than to 'pit material against painting, or regard one above the other', Schultz considers it

better that one consider the various ways the two mediums interact, for it is the combination of their respective features, the way the one was made to respond to the other during the creative process, that sets Schwitters' Merz work apart' and that 'is without parallel in the avant-garde's exploration of assemblage and collage.'²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Dietrich notes that Schwitters continued to paint alongside developing his Merz manifesto, Dietrich 1995, a point which Isabel Schultz takes up in "Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage." In *Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage*, ed. by Isabel Schulz (Houston: Meril Foundation, 2010).

²⁰⁵ Schmalenbach 1967, 61, 64

²⁰⁶ Schultz 2010, p. 54 and p. 51.

Schultz writes that for Schwitters, colour was essentially a medium of expression. Found materials could be left in their original colours or painted over. The printed papers and materials were considered to enhance and add to traditional pigments, she continues,

The term Merz essentially means combining all conceivable materials for artistic purposes, and in terms of techniques treating all of them with equal respect. So Merz painting not only employs paint and canvas, brush and palette, but all the materials appealing to the eye and all the requisite tools.

This process was a kind of painting with materials, 'a balanced interplay, an integrated relationship between collaged elements and painted sections'.²⁰⁷ On Schwitters' process, Schultz cites the German-American art historian and art dealer Charlotte Weidler, who watched Schwitters work,

He spread flour and water over the page, then moved and shuffled and manipulated his scraps of paper around in the paste while the paper was wet. With his finger-tips he worked little pieces of crumbled paper into the wet surface; he also spread tints of water colour or gouache around to get variations in shadings of tone. In this way he used flour both as paste and as paint. Finally he removed the excess paste with a damp rag, leaving some like an overglaze in places where he wanted to veil or mute a part of the colour.²⁰⁸

Working with colour and collage introduced the painterly problems of pictorial space which complicate the flatness of the collage surface. Schultz writes,

Beginning in the 1930s, Schwitters painted his picture grounds more and more often with a painterly continuum of softly blurred shapes on which flat objects appear to float. He compensated for the resulting illusion of space, however, by emphasizing the surface; he made the composition and structure of the applied pigment and those of the selected objects more textured than they had been previously.²⁰⁹

Aware of the reduction of colours to the primary choices of Mondrian and Van Doesburg, or of El Lissitzky's red, for Schwitters, this restraint was 'important as a way of opposing with system and clarity the arbitrary imitations of nature and soul-bearings of the last few decades' and pointed out 'If it were possible to once again find the path to variety from reduction without neglecting clarity, it would be an enrichment that one can only

²⁰⁷ Schwitters cited in Schultz, from 'Die Merzmalerei' in *Sturm* 10, no. 4, 1919, Trans to English by John Elderfield, cited by John Elderfield, *Kurt Schwitters* (New York, Thames and Hudson 1985), p.50-51, p. 54.

²⁰⁸ Schultz, quote from Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh, 1962, p. 76.

²⁰⁹ Schulz, 2010, p. 56.

welcome'.²¹⁰ Although Schwitters did not develop his own theory of colour, unlike Delaunay or Kandinsky, what Schultz observes in Schwitters' use of colour is his reference to the relationship between colour and music, where 'he compares...the techniques and laws of painting to those of music' not to combine them but to apply methods and ideas of composition in music to his own use of colours,

He compared the successive sequence of tones in music with the juxtaposition of colours, and the simultaneous tones in a chord with the 'layering' of mixed paint.....He also speaks of white, gray, and black as a 'chord', for they contained all possible colours.²¹¹

For Schwitters, she writes 'painting was not to be compared to a ribbon in time, because painting encompasses an infinite number of directions' noting that, 'once various colours come together on a surface, equidistant from the eye, their interrelationships alone create space and destroy the surface – itself part of space as well'.²¹² This tension between depth - resulting from glazes of paint- and surface - defined by the addition of found materials- Schultz comments on, 'he compensated for the resulting illusion of space, however, by emphasizing the surface' by increasing the texture of both paint and of the applied found objects.²¹³

By combining collage with painting, Schultz asserts that for Schwitters tradition was not inimical to the avant-garde, 'It was not contradictory to deliberately place himself, the Merz artist and avant-gardist, in a centuries old tradition of atmospheric painting, distinguished by vitality and richness and, above all, colours of radiance and substance'.²¹⁴ She writes 'As his first published text about Merz painting makes clear, his intention was not to replace artistic traditions but rather to integrate them productively into his new and different Merz concept of art and thereby extend what already existed'.²¹⁵ In this sense, Schwitters intentions are also those of this project.

Conclusion

Contextual discussion on collage raises issues of its challenge to both the traditional art form of painting as well as to philosophical notions of truth and representation.

²¹⁰ Schwitters in Schultz, 2010, p. 57.

²¹¹ Schultz, 2010, p. 60.

²¹² Ibid. p. 61.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 56.

²¹⁴ Ibid. p. 59.

²¹⁵ Text referred to by Schultz is Schwitters 'Die Merzmalerei' in *Sturm* 10, no. 4, 1919, Trans to English by John Elderfield, in Elderfield, 1985.

Accumulative, fragmentary, and heterogeneous, collage is a transdisciplinary process, where abrupt juxtapositions of fragments, of images and words, removed from familiar contexts gives rise to unexpected new meanings. The double status of collage arising from juxtaposition results in polyvalence and the simultaneity of multiple readings and meaning, that collapses past and present, time and place while constructing new heterogeneous space that is complex and complicated, promoting buffering zones of intersection, osmosis and exchange. It does not reproduce or reflect but brings together in a conscious act of overlapping and juxtaposition of the found and disparate. It addresses polyvalence and the simultaneity of multiple readings and meaning, that collapses past and present, time and place, while constructing new heterogeneous space that is complex and complicated, promoting buffering zones of intersection, osmosis and exchange.

Acted out in a specific time and place with contingent material, the artist and viewer are live agents of construction, and while not innately subversive, collage brings about change by constructing the new. Concerned with the transformative value of bringing together rather than with destruction and breaking apart, collage is a means of constructing relations between different things and domains. Unlike traditional painting and philosophy, collage is not premised on correspondence of the similar but on the juxtaposition of difference by logic of association.

This accumulative and fragmentary operation is also a mental process, a thinking process. The double status of collage and resulting shifting interpretative strategy leads to an accretion of meaning, rather than a once and for all interpretation. Discursive formulation, critical tool, transdisciplinary system and method, collage is a non-linear thinking process, where the artwork does not reflect the thinking but is the thinking process itself, acted out in a specific time and place, where the artist and viewer are live components of its construction. As a zone of thought construction, the collage process is continuous, an open-ended and unfinished process of juxtaposition and exchange. Non-linear thinking is made linear in retrospect, in the telling of its making, in linear, sequential and irreducibly complicated description.

Discussion 1b: grids

The grid announces, among other things, modern art's will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse...It is safe to say that no form within the whole realm of modern aesthetic production has sustained itself so relentlessly while at the same time being so impervious to change.²¹⁶

It is important...not to mistake the regularity of the grid and its attendant connection to social, political, or economic power as a permanent state...it is its *use* that brings each grid to life.²¹⁷

Von Wiegand describes how Mondrian changed the lines, moving them back and forth, and how he swapped the positions of the top and bottom lines in different colours by applying pieces of tape to the intersections.²¹⁸

Identified as mutually exclusive or in conflict with discourses of collage, in the history of art, grids exist in parallel, each having its own discourse, strategy and associations. This discussion utilises contextual study drawn from 20th and 21st century history and theory to explore a field for grids. It adopts an 'outsider' approach providing a parallel text offering insights into the broader field of the practice. It discusses grids in terms of structure and structuring, what is established and fixed, the inherited and tradition, and of projection and mapping, correlations and coordinates, and establishing grids as the coordinating alignment in making links and connections.

Commonly understood to refer to a framework of intersecting spaced parallel bars such as grating, mesh or gauze, the grid is a network of crossing lines that form a series of squares or rectangles, in a grille, lattice or matrix. From antiquity to the present, grids permeate

²¹⁶ Rosalind Krauss, "Grids" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, by R. E. Krauss, 9-22. (MIT Press, 1985). p. 9.

²¹⁷ Hannah Higgins, *The Grid Book*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), p. 10,11.

²¹⁸ Hans Jenson 'Working at the Table' in Francesco Manacorda and Michael White, eds. *Mondrian and his Studios: Colour in Space*. London: Tate Publishing, 2014, p. 122.

everyday life in all manner of systems of organisation and management. The idea of the grid and module is ancient. Where architecture and mathematics are closely aligned it is used to lay down plans on the ground, to establish the general layout of space, and in structuring proportion and decoration in design.²¹⁹ A key structural device in graphic design, typography and web design, in painting, sculpture, furniture, architecture, interior design, and computing, it has also played a central role in development and consolidation of the modern movement in the 20th century.

The transdisciplinary character of the grid is revealed in the repetition of the brick, in maps and musical notation, of the financial lists of the ledger, in the box form and container network, housing and urban planning, and most dominantly in the 'screen' of painting, film, TV, and other digital devices, each tied to its own political, social, economic and religious histories, and 'aligning with a different universalising scheme'.²²⁰

Operating by imposing systems of order, grids function through the demarcation of alignment, of taxonomies, categories, and classification, apportioning a type or value of something. They divide up and share out. The philosophical and material conditions that developed with industrialization and urbanization premised on order, rationality, and stability, eternal and immutable, are also those of the grid. In Higgin's words '...grids could be said to state the opposition between the detail and the totality, the chaotic and the ordered, and the individual and society geometrically, as a relationship between the square module ... and the grid'.²²¹ The grid can be conceptualised as a site for dividing up, separating out, and distinguishing difference, it also sets up relationships providing a means for resolution of opposition. Paradoxically, in dividing, the grid also links together.

In 'Ordering Disorder: Grid principles for Web Design', Vinh writes that although grids provide the designer with a powerful method for creating order out of disorder, he points out that it is a type of order reflecting the designer's view ideal of the world, a tyrannical imposition of order on an essentially disordered chaotic place.²²²

Reviled as an image of dehumanisation with its attendant associations of penal codes and regulatory systems, the grid is also celebrated for its efficiency, and seen as a dominant

²¹⁹ Corinna Rossi, *Architecture and Mathematics in Ancient Egypt*. (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²²⁰ Higgins 2009, p. 8.

²²¹ Ibid. p. 9.

²²² Khoi Vinh, K. *Ordering Disorder: Grid Principles for Web Design*. (Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2010), p. 1.

mythological form of modern life as noted in Rosalind Krauss' essay 'Grids'. For Krauss it announces modern art's will to silence, its absolute autonomy, and its 'hostility' to discourse. 'It is what art looks like when it turns its back on nature... In the modern era, 'The Grid' is a means of crowding out the dimensions of the real and replacing them with...aesthetic decree'.²²³ However, painter Bridget Riley rejects Krauss' assertion of stringent self-reference. Reflecting on the role played by Mondrian's Theosophical beliefs in the formulation of his orthogonal compositions, Riley argues that they were not just a matter of pure form or 'exclusive visuality'.²²⁴

The square is the subject of Iwona Blazwick's exhibition *Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract Art and Society 1915 – 2015*. Blazwick draws out themes of 'Utopia' and the ideal society in the 'Architectonics' of transformative spaces; in all aspects of visual culture of 'The Everyday'; and 'Communication', in broadcasting and spreading the message to a mass audience.²²⁵ By contrast, exhibiting their disenchantment of 'modernist models', the 'Against Grids' exhibition and accompanying text dismisses the grid form altogether. The contributors, including Brandon Taylor reject the grid as organising principle in favour of computer-assisted 'organic' cell-like models based on awareness natural geometries of water turbulence, weather patterns and other patterns of distribution.²²⁶

Rather than dismissing grids, Higgins writes that the very experience of 'chaos-as-chaos' requires an organising principle, through which it is possible to perceive something as chaotic relative to something that is not. She conceives of the structures 'deeply embedded within nature', as non-quadrilateral grids hidden inside Newton's study of force vectors, Einstein's space time, and Mandelbrot's fractal geometry and in doing so multiplies and complicates what it is that counts as a grid.²²⁷ Further to which Higgins adds the relationship between grids and human sensory and cognitive frameworks that is articulated by Howard Gardner's description of human intelligences in the grid-based terminology of 'frames of mind'.²²⁸

²²³ Krauss, 1985, p. 9.

²²⁴ Bridget Riley, *Mondrian: Nature to Abstraction* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1997).

²²⁵ Iwona Blazwick, ed. *Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract Art and Society 1915 - 2015*. (Munich, London and New York: Whitechapel Gallery and Prestel, 2015).

²²⁶ Exhibition catalogue, Brandon Taylor, *Against Grids*, (University Of Liverpool, 2010).

²²⁷ Higgins, p. 257.

²²⁸ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

Systematic, the grid provides stability, regularity, conformity, containment, accountability and relationship. When imposed, the grid dominates, when constructed the grid provides scaffolding. It provides the elusive compositional principle of alignment.

Grid Structure, correlations between form and meaning

Conceptualised as a site for dividing up, separating out and distinguishing difference, the grid also sets up relationships; in dividing up, the grid also links together. This section discusses how the grid has been put to use, and what alignments have been constructed between formal aspects of the grid and different meanings. For this, it draws on Jack H. Williamson's survey 'The Grid: Its History, Use and Meaning'²²⁹ for discussion on how the grid-as symbol - has been used to represent ideas, qualities and worldviews. Williamson discusses how the grid's meaning has shifted from threshold between physical and superphysical worlds, to representation of the surface of the physical world and the rational cognition which observes it, to a threshold to the sub-material world and irrationality. While my project does not follow Williamson's use of symbolism and representation, what is of interest are the links and connections he presents, the association of grid forms with different ideas, qualities and worldviews, for which he constructs his historiographical matrix.

In his survey, Williamson divides the grid form into four subsets, and discusses their symbolic aspects and functions in relation to four historical periods. The first period covers the late medieval Christian world, the second, the Renaissance and Cartesian grid, the third is the modern grid, and finally the fourth, the postmodern grid of the period after 1970s. Defining the grid as a proportional system of coordinates intersected by vertical and horizontal axes, his typology of four sub forms are; coordinate based, intersection based, module based and line based. In order to understand the symbolic function of each, he examines significant points in the development of both the grid and its key elements. It is useful to note that he does not directly correlate a grid form to a specific period but identifies elements of the former which he then links with the latter.

²²⁹ Jack H. Williamson, "The Grid: History, Use and Meaning." *Design Issues*, Vol 3, No 2, 1986: 15-30

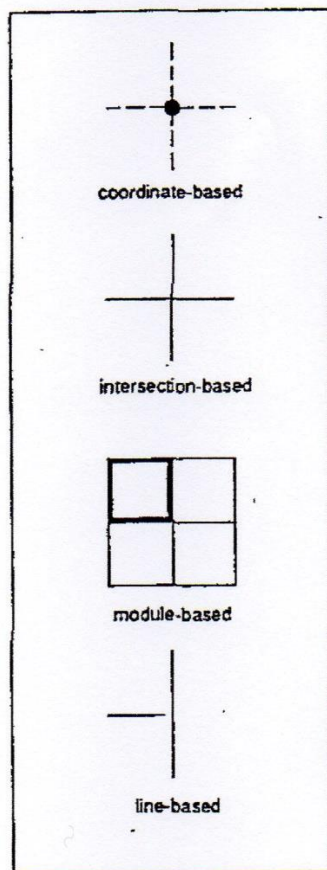


Fig. 30. Jack H. Williamson, *Typography of the Grid: the four subforms*. 1986.²³⁰

The first sub form of the grid, the point-based grid he links to the late medieval Christian world, where it is used to emphasize the focusing potential of the co-ordinate, either of itself or as the intersection of two axes, where the axis lines play a secondary role. The symbolic status of the point based grid is premised on the intersection of the vertical with the horizontal, as a set of vertical relations between the superphysical above and material reality below.

²³⁰ Williamson, 1986, p. 15.

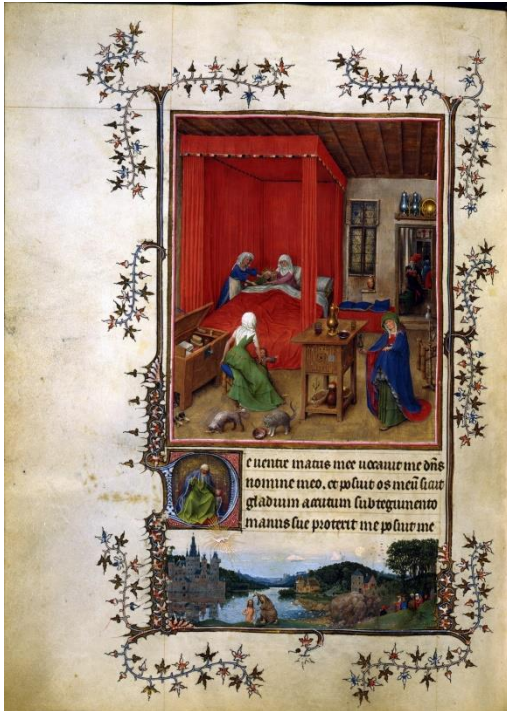


Fig. 31. Birth of St John the Baptist (above) and the Baptism of Christ (below), by "Hand G", Turin, manuscript page from Tres Belles Heures de Notre Dame, Turin-Milan Book of Hours, fifteenth century.²³¹

Citing Donald Byrne's "Manuscript Ruling and Pictorial Design in the Work of the Limborgs, the Bedford Master and the Boucicault Master" Williamson argues that the grid establishes a visual relationship between depicted objects and events removed from each other in space and time but spiritually linked by God, who acts behind outer historical events to bring about the world's redemption. Here, the grid acts as more than just a compositional device, it symbolizes God's design plan for the redemption of the world and man, where the coordinates – the junctures where special symbols and events are sited - represent crossing points or *thresholds* between distinct levels of spiritual and physical reality. He writes 'Visual analysis of the pictorial composition reveals that these lines have a representational and symbolic purpose superseding alignment for mere esthetic effect'.²³²

In the Renaissance, Williamson identifies a shift from a grid based on value laden coordinates and intersections, to one conceived as a field made up of points and axes, reflecting the shift from sacred to secular thinking. He writes 'Field based grids were used to emphasise the expansive potential of the repeated module or individual axis line in continuous or near continuous extension. There, elements in turn defined a *set of*

²³¹ (online image) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turin-Milan_Book_of_Hours (accessed 8 July 2016)

²³² Williamson 1986, p. 17.

horizontal relations occurring on a physical plane'.²³³ He also notes that the development of this field-based grid of coordinates coincided with the development of the navigational axes of longitude and latitude which mapped the surface of the globe. Representing relative physical distances where the individual squares framed specific places, this grid functioned equally well as a field of either axes or modules. The field-based grid is employed by mathematical perspective construction either to simulate or to document spatial relationships between physical points on a plane. It is this particular form of grid that is tilted to create the illusion of spatial recession in three dimensions through the implied convergence of parallel lines. Unlike the medieval grid, the intention of this grid form was not to lead the viewer from the material to the superphysical world. Rather, the perspectival space was conceived of as an extension of the viewer's own space, following Leon Battista Alberti who wrote that the effect was similar to that of looking through a window.



Fig. 32. Albrecht Durer, *Draughtsman Making a Perspective Drawing of a Reclining Woman* woodcut print, 1538.²³⁴

The image of Albrecht Durer's Woodcut (1538) demonstrates how the grid was used for recording visual reality. For Williamson, the grid breaks down the three dimensional visual field into a set of modules for the purpose of transferring and reconstructing it onto another surface with a corresponding grid. Williamson identifies three paradigmatic themes of this period, each of which finds expression in the grid; an intense fascination in surface appearance and its description, a developing interest in invisible laws and structural

²³³ Williamson, 1986, p. 18.

²³⁴ Albrecht Durer, 1583, (online Image)

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection#!?q=Albrecht%20Durer%20Man%20Drawing%20a%20Reclining%20Woman.&sortBy=Relevance&sortOrder=asc&offset=0&perPage=20&pageSize=0> (accessed 8 July 2016)

principles that underlie external appearance, and the increased status of the rational mind seeking to discover structure through critical observation.²³⁵ In *Discourse on Method*, Descartes presents four rules for acquiring knowledge, paraphrased as follows,²³⁶

- 1) doubt all that is not clearly evident to be true and do not accept surface appearance,
- 2) always begin by dividing each problem into its smallest component parts,
- 3) always conduct thoughts in logical order proceeding from that which is the most simple to that which is most complex,
- 4) reason rigorously and geometrically and never skip a logical step.

As the rules elaborated in the *Discourse* made clear, appearances are suspect, and a problem, (or, in visual terms, a field) is to be divided into its smallest component parts. Increasingly, the grid becomes identified with an increasingly abstract material reality and laws. In Descartes treatise *Geometry*, of 1637, 'Descartes lays the foundations for an analytical geometry which defines the position of co-ordinates and axes- conceived as numerical quantities – on a plane in space'.²³⁷ In Williamson's analysis it is Descartes' emphasis on abstraction that loosens the grid's association with the world of appearances. He points out 'This geometric, reductive operation is, of course, a mental process. The grid thus comes to represent not only the structural laws and principles behind physical appearance, but the *process* of thinking itself', where thinking and reasoning are defined by geometry and the process of reductive abstraction.²³⁸

For the 20th century, Williamson's grid narrative moves from the dual emphasis on appearance and structure that had characterized the symbolism of the grid during the Renaissance, scientific revolution and Enlightenment toward structure alone. To support this he cites Paul Cezanne's abstraction and geometricism of nature and emphasis on the flat surface of picture plane, the faceting of the picture plane by Cubism, and Mondrian's 'pictorial grid of synthetic Cubism, to explore and purify it in virtual isolation from other pictorial elements'. Williamson observes Mondrian's paintings often appear to continue off the edge of the canvas, suggesting that the field extends infinitely in all directions, and

²³⁵ Williamson, 1986, p. 20.

²³⁶ From Robert Nisbet, *The History of the Ideas of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), p116.

²³⁷ Williamson 1986, p. 16.

²³⁸ Ibid. p. 20. This notion is taken up by Donald Kuspit in his essay on the grid sculptures of Sol LeWitt, "Sol LeWitt: The Look of Thought." *Art in America*, September, 1975: 42-49.

where the viewer sees only that portion visible within the 'window' of the canvas. Williamson writes of Mondrian's line based grids as 'thoroughly Cartesian in its presentation of an unchanging regular and isotropic universal field, ruled by logic and by the mathematical law that underlies the world of external appearance'. This concept of an axially-defined field in infinite expression brings the symbolism of the Cartesian grid to its highest stage of development by linking it with the concept of universal continuum²³⁹ from contemporary physics. Synonymous with the continuum itself, the modernist grid is described as a never-ending series of modules, a field based matrix based on the line and module.

Williamson asserts that the Modernist de-emphasis on the point co-ordinate or individual unit in favour of 20th century conceptions of field is a characteristic carried over into the post-modern. He writes that this 'pro-field, anti- or neutralized-point paradigm' also characterized leading conceptions of the *person-environment relationship* of the period. Drawing on sociology and psychology, Williamson cites Durkheim, Freud and Watson²⁴⁰ and their descriptions of human behaviour as being environmentally or statistically determined. From the sociopolitical arena, Williamson cites examples where greater emphasis is placed on groups and relations between groups rather than on the autonomous individual; and in design, the move to international styles to counter national styles and differences. And writes,

It is therefore not surprising that an anti-individualistic vision expressed itself in the entire spectrum of innovations which accompanied the Cartesian grid in European graphic design in the 1920s. The underlying, invisible matrix of the grid guided the placement not of manually produced letterforms or expressive gestures, but of clean and geometric sans serif typography.²⁴¹

²³⁹ The universal continuum refers to the space-time of Einstein's 'Special Theory of Relativity' of 1905, Williamson writes 'Einstein had defined the infinite as merely the finite in extension', his footnote 17.

²⁴⁰ Student of John Dewey, John Watson was a pioneering American psychologist who established the psychological school of behaviorism.

²⁴¹ Williamson, 1986, p. 23.

manually applied gestural marks and accidental elements. On the post-modern grid, Williamson writes,

The grid and composition departed from modernism's functionalist ethic, sometimes to the point of sacrificing the clarity, legibility and readability of the typographic message itself by disrupting the alignment of type or in some way obscuring the individual words or letters.²⁴⁴

Significant here is the shift away from the hegemony of modernism's functionalist ethic, one structured and governed by Cartesian logic and mathematical reductionism, to something less determined and more unstable.

Williamson links Michael Faraday's concept of field, the less predictable, rational or tangible electric 'lines-of-force', with the Italian Futurists' revolutionary manifesto of dynamic speed and change, whose reckless and impassioned action are a far cry from the 'cool calculation and rational passivity' of International Modernism.

To notions of wild unpredictability, Williamson adds reference to Heisenberg's physics of 'indeterminacy' or the uncertainty principle, which asserts that under the predictable mechanistic laws that rule the visible world, another set of laws operate on the atomic level, ones which have no apparent order, on which it was assumed the world was built. The notion that beneath an apparently rational exterior was an irrational inner world was taken up by Freud,

With Freud, the contingent twentieth century theme of the *freeing* of forces that are arational or irrational, and that are located beneath the normal world of outer appearance and *bringing them up into* the outer world, finds dramatic expression.²⁴⁵

Freud's technique of 'free (word) association' appropriated by the nihilistic Dadaist art movement, 'who satirically celebrated the irrational in man', was also taken up by the Surrealists, who produced works 'designed to engage not the viewer's conscious self, but his or her subrational self'. Following Williamson, it was out of these antirationalist tendencies and traditions coming together in the 1960s and early 1970s, that postmodernism came about, and which impacted on the symbolic role of the grid. This happened in two ways, first, a belief that surfaces were superficial and therefore false and second, an interest in the exploration of what lay behind such surfaces. Williamson writes,

²⁴⁴ Williamson, 1986, p. 25.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 27.

...no longer did the outside have to be functionally related to the inside. Rather, superficial decoration was allowed, and the resulting contradiction or discontinuity between inside and out was itself a strong critique of the clean, rational exterior of modernist architecture.²⁴⁶

He links this notion of duality to the structuralist movement in French linguistics, where 'unlike modernism, structuralism held that surface appearances were false and that rationality was itself a surface phenomenon... (and) that rationality, the conscious self, and conscious speech were false fronts for irrationality'. This is demonstrated in graphic design of the period, an example being Wolfgang Weingart's *State Art Aid* poster of 1979.

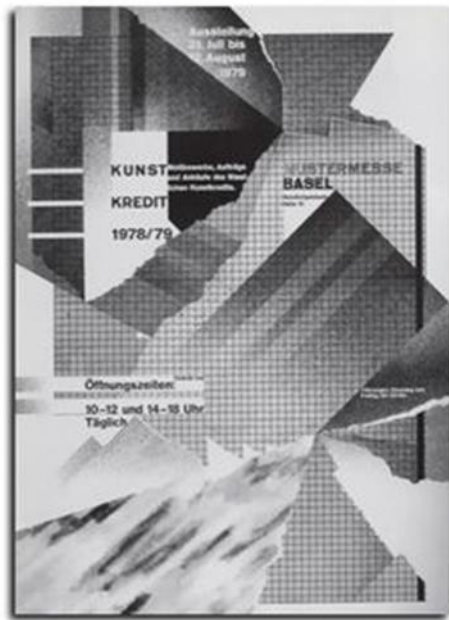


Fig. 35. Wolfgang Weingart, *State Art Aid* poster, 1979, Museum für Gestaltung, Switzerland.²⁴⁷

Williamson correlates the fracturing of the gridded surface with the destruction of the field of the rational mind, the tilted grid representing the arational or irrational, free floating or disembodied consciousness where the grid – the symbol of the field of consciousness – has become disoriented in its detachment from the world, as indicated by its lack of gravitational orientation. Rather than threshold to the superphysical of the medieval grid, Williamson proposes the postmodern grid is threshold to the subphysical and the irrational.²⁴⁸ He footnotes the use of the tilted grid in relation to computers and hi-tech

²⁴⁶ Williamson, 1986, p. 28.

²⁴⁷ (online image) <https://www.typographicposters.com/wolfgang-weingart/> (accessed 7 July 2016)

²⁴⁸ Williamson 1986, p. 30.

advertising, 'is appropriate inasmuch as the computer is the ultimate externalization (disembodiment) of human rationality'.²⁴⁹

Williamson concludes that despite the accomplishments of post-modernism, which he identifies as the throwing off of a severe rationalism which denied more intuitive faculties, the exploration of symbolic and decorative values, and a recognition and utilization of the past, he writes that the movement is at base limited by an insufficient image of the human being, an interpretation that generally admits of only rational and subrational faculties. In doing so he sees post-modernism as a form of late modernism, in that it reveals rather than goes beyond the limitations of modernism's conception of the human being.

Based on Williamson's essay, this section of discussion On Grids has pursued ideas about how the grid has been put to use, and what alignments have been constructed between formal aspects of the grid and different meanings across different historical periods.

It is interesting to note that although Williamson refers to the post-modern as one of anti-rationality or irrationality, also evident in the anti-rationalist undercurrent of 20th century modernism and the post 1960s conscious reaction to modernism in art history, he does not mention collage. What he does recognise is that the anti-rationalist tendencies and traditions in 20th century art, scientific thought, and popular culture existed side by side with the stream of modernist rationality.

In his insightful conclusion, Williamson draws attention to the insufficient image of the human presented by postmodernism and by default, modernism, an interpretation which, in general, remains dependent on a logic of Cartesian duality. Williamson presents the grid as a powerful aligning structure, crossing points or *thresholds* between spiritual and physical reality, as a mode of logic construction for a field of knowledge, it is representative of the thinking process itself, rational, universally valid, objective and progress oriented. It is also a reverse threshold to the subphysical and the irrational, symbol of the field of consciousness, of the rational/ subrational duality.

Following a contextualised formalist approach to art history, his somewhat broad brush account of history, while abbreviated, succeeds in making the point that the grid as symbol or system of meaning while retaining its basic typology is open to change and reconfiguration dependent on the use to which it is put.

²⁴⁹ Williamson 1986, p. 30, footnote 27.

Grid Structuring: Making and Breaking the Grid

Further to the discussion presented by Williamson's typology of the grid, this section addresses the dynamic visual qualities inherent in grid forms structured by grid principles of alignment and draws on Timothy Samara's analysis *Making and Breaking the Grid* to provide discussion on grid construction for graphic designers, combining word and image. Samara introduces the typographic grid as an organising principle that is ingrained in current practice of graphic design as well as being highly contested, one that is simultaneously revered and reviled for its absolutes inherent in its conception.²⁵⁰ Instituted by Modernism, the grid re-stated a long-ingrained sense of order, formalizing it to yet another degree and transforming it into an established part of design.²⁵¹

Samara describes the typographic grid as an orthogonal planning system that parcels information into manageable chunks, where like items are arranged in similar ways so that their similarities are made more apparent and, therefore, more recognisable. The grid renders the elements it controls into a neutral spatial field of regularity that facilitates accessibility, in that viewers know where to locate information they seek because the junctures of horizontal and vertical divisions act as signposts for locating that information. The system helps the viewer understand its use. In one sense, the grid is like a visual filing cabinet,²⁵² operating by classification based on similarity.

Making the Grid

The anatomy of the grid presented by Samara involves breaking the typographic page into parts, consisting of columns, margins, flowlines, spatial zones, modules and markers. The spatial zone is governed by a series of part-to-whole relationships where alignments between masses and voids visually connect or separate them.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Timothy Samara, *Making and Breaking the Grid: A Graphic Design Layout Workshop*. (Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2002), p. 9.

²⁵¹ Ibid. p. 9.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid. p. 23.

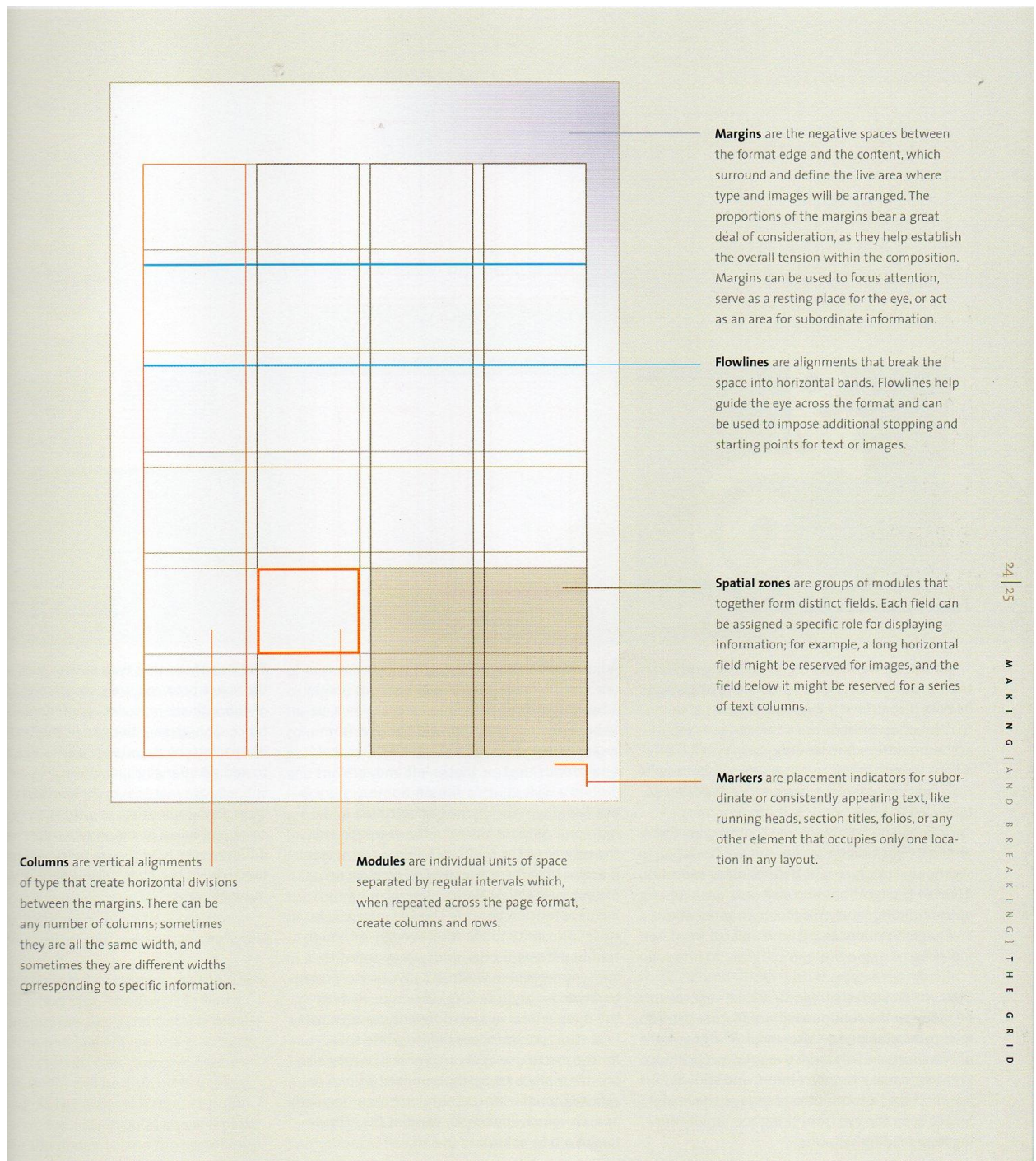


Fig. 36. Timothy Samara, *Anatomy of the Grid: The Basic Parts of the Page*, 2002.²⁵⁴

The grid organises this relationship of alignments and hierarchies into an intelligible order that is repeatable and understandable by others.²⁵⁵ This closely follows the grid systems of

²⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 25.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 23.

design.²⁵⁶

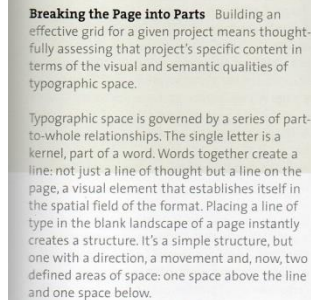


Fig. 37. Timothy Samara, *Breaking the Page into Parts*, 2002.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Samara draws on Müller-Brockmann's book spread described in *Grid Systems* of 1981.
²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 23.

developed it is a closed system. The second phase consists of laying out the material according to the guidelines established by the grid.

Samara notes that it is the designer who decides on the grid's structure, which in turn is based on the local situation at hand. He also recognises there is not just one grid but many grid forms, which, while sharing certain features they differ and serve different purposes. It is only once the structure is decided, that it is then fixed and set to use. The grid and grids are designed through experience of working with material, word and image, sound and motion, with how it performs when it is arranged in certain ways.

Breaking the Grid

Samara discusses breaking the grid a process which deals with material of greater complexity and which requires alternative graphic treatment. In the chapter on 'Exploring Other Options: A Guide to Grid Deconstruction and Nonstructural Design Approaches' Samara identifies five options of Grid Deconstruction, Linguistic Deconstruction, Spontaneous Optical Composition, Conceptual or Pictorial Allusion and Chance Operation.

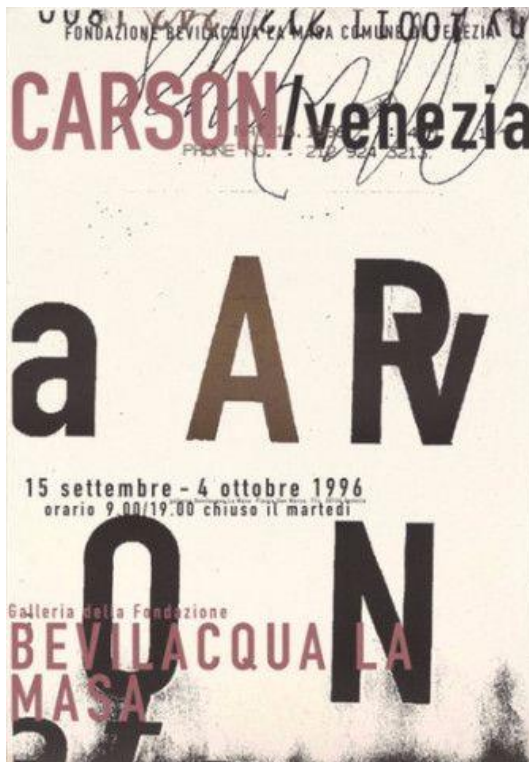


Fig. 38. David Carson, *Venezia* poster, 1994.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ (online image) <https://www.davidcarsonart.com/products/venice-large-signed> (accessed 7 July 2016)

The example he gives of David Carson's *Venezia* poster exemplifies the vigorous composition that defies the rational approach of grids-based design. The loose structure, dynamic, instinctive positioning and treatment of forms, the raw texture of the letters and background, and the overlapping of forms that refer to the legible information, together creates a kinetic experience that is both filmic and reminiscent of tattered street posters.²⁵⁹ He writes that the purpose of grid deconstruction is to deform a rationally structured space, so that the elements within that space are forced into new relationships; or simply put, beginning with a grid and altering it to see what happens and makes the comment, 'That said, it's probably clear that there's no real set of rules that can be applied to the process of deconstructing' and so he provides a description of a methodical way. The process Samara describes includes splitting apart the grid, cutting apart major zones and shifting them vertically or horizontally, or moving it to another place and aligning it with some other kind of information, 'in such a way that creates a new verbal connection that did not exist before'. Samara observes that the shifted information may wind up behind or on top of some other information if a change in size or density accompanies the shift placement, noting that 'The optical confusion this causes might be perceived as a surreal kind of space where foreground and background swap places'. Although this appears to speak the language of Dada and Surrealism, of destruction and irrationality, this process takes as its starting point the rationally structured space of the grid.

Samara describes the method of 'Spontaneous Optical Composition' as purposeful intuitive placement which,

...starts fast and loose: the designer works with the material much like a painter does, making quick decisions as material is put together and the relationships are first seen. As the different optical qualities of the elements begin to interact, the designer can determine which qualities are affected by those initial decisions and make adjustments to enhance or negate the qualities in whatever way is most appropriate for the communication.²⁶⁰

The method's inherent liveliness has an affinity to collage, where the result is a structure that is dependent on the optical tensions of the composition and their connection to the information hierarchy within the space. Samara comments on collage in projects including 'Grid Deconstructions and Non-Grid-Based Design Projects', and 'Collage and Filmic Column Grid Deconstruction', and the example he provides of 'Spontaneous Geometric

²⁵⁹ Samara, 2002, p. 121.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 124

Composition' is reminiscent of the red and black posters of the Russian Constructivists. On 'Systematic Collage Column Grid Deconstruction' Samara writes,

Organised around the principle of collage, this inventive design journal walks a middle ground between apparent chaos and order. Careful study of cut-paper shapes and their overlaps led to the development of a system for laying paragraphs of text. A comprehensive design manual provides guidelines for creating the shapes for text boxes.²⁶¹

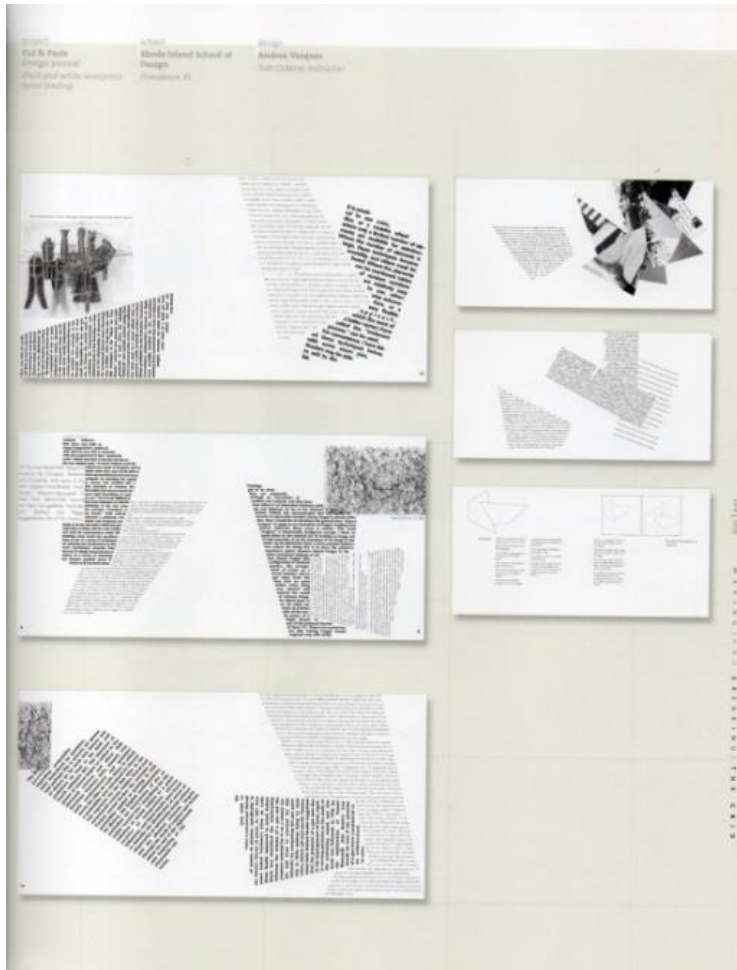


Fig 39. Andrea Vazquez, pages from *Cut & Paste Design Journal*, 2000.²⁶²

While retaining verisimilitude of the effects of collage, this digitally produced design bypasses material handling and its attendant haptic opportunities, and is constructed as before on the pixelated grid of the computer screen,

Reading order depends on a number of variables: the relative position of the collage shapes, the size and orientation of the text within those shapes, and the

²⁶¹ Ibid. p. 188.

²⁶² Ibid. p. 188-189.

density of the text on the page. By varying these parameters, the designer is able to control the flow through the paragraphs when needed.²⁶³

Straying into collage territory in the 'Breaking the Grid' section, Samara recognises that an increased complexity requires a different approach. He touches on some of the techniques and processes of collage including working with a variety of material (all digital?), with several grid forms, and without a grid. His discussion on collage mainly features its means for deconstruction. The few occasions where collage is seen otherwise, the hierarchy provided by constituent information becomes the basis for the organisation of collage elements.²⁶⁴ Digitally produced, they have a reductive homogeneity which is also contributed to by the print publication process. Although digitally arrived at, whatever the form or method the designer selects, he keeps a weather eye on what is most appropriate for the purposes of graphic communication.

Samara expands the principle of alignment in the anatomy of grid design, offering an alternative approach to Williamson's typography of the grid. In recognising the need for utilising alternative and additional methods prompted by the increased complexity of material, Samara writes on grids with collage and does so with projects and nomenclature that becomes increasingly complicated. Significantly, he mentions Schwitters' constructive interests under the heading 'Order and Disorder United'.²⁶⁵ Samara's description of the grid develops the basic typology presented by Williamson. Although correlations can be made between the two; both identify the module and line as constituent factors, Samara's anatomy affords Williamson's line a width, having the capacity to form a lattice between modules, but this property is not noted here. What discussion of both Williamson and Samara achieves is acknowledgment of the pivotal role of the designer in making key decisions in the design process, ones that construct alignments across the page, ones determined by the intentions of the designer.

Grids and colour: structuring and mapping relationships

Williamson's 20th Century grid narrative refers to Cezanne's abstraction and geometricism of both nature and the picture plane, and of Mondrian's pictorial grids as 'thoroughly Cartesian', dictated by logic and mathematical law. Bridget Riley offers a

²⁶³ Ibid. p. 188-189.

²⁶⁴ Samara 2002, p. 150

²⁶⁵ Samara 2002, p. 113

different, more phenomenological dimension to both Cezanne and Mondrian's painting, which she writes about in terms of the effects of colour interaction where the basis of colour is its instability, 'In working sur le motif, Cezanne realised that light, reflections and shadows dematerialize the objects...it is a labyrinth of relationships'.²⁶⁶



Fig. 40. Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902-1904.²⁶⁷

Cezanne painted what he called his 'petite sensations', and wrote 'to paint after nature is not a matter of copying the objective world, it's giving shape to your sensations'.²⁶⁸

With carefully positioned, brushstrokes, Cezanne maps the surface of the canvas, establishing relationships and alignments between them. Riley reflects,

Through a multiplicity of diagonals...Cezanne builds a highly sensitive visual field which allows him to accumulate and disperse tensions, to shift changing rhythms through the painting.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Robert Kudielka ed. *The Eye's Mind: Bridget Riley Collected writings 1965 – 1999*, (Thames and Hudson in association with the Serpentine Gallery and De Montfort University 1999), p. 168-9

²⁶⁷ Paul Cezanne, 1902-1904, (online Image)

<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/312.html?page=3> (accessed 7 July 2016)

²⁶⁸ In French, 'sensation' is related to the verb sentir which means 'to feel'. The two words were used interchangeably by critics and the artists. (online)

http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/insight/virag_imptechniques/virag_imptechniques02.html (accessed 7 July 2016)

²⁶⁹ Kudielka, 1999, p. 170.



Fig. 41. Paul Cezanne, *Sainte-Victoire vue des Lauves*, Aquarelle, 1902-1906.²⁷⁰

This colour sketch, and Cezanne's unfinished painting, show more clearly the cumulative mapping of the canvas surface with colour brushstrokes where each brushstroke is the result of a careful positioning and alignment with others. The resulting effect of this working method, the 'shifting viewpoint' and 'flattened' picture plane is taken up by Picasso and Braque, both familiar with Cezanne's paintings of the southern landscape.

Adding to Williamson's analysis of the grid is Riley's account of Mondrian's *Composition A: Composition with Black, Red, Grey, Yellow, and Blue*, and her discussion on his use of the grid in conjunction with colour composition, and resulting dynamic relationships and tensions.

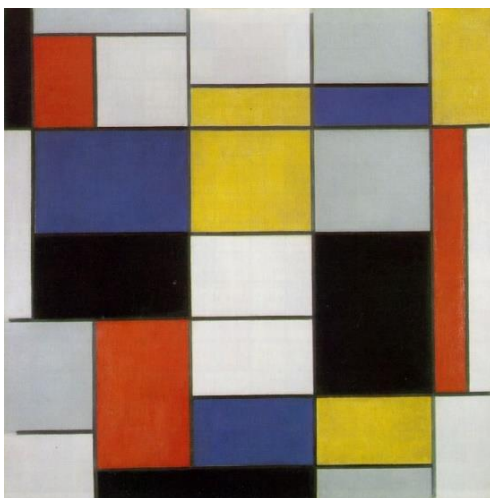


Fig. 42. Piet Mondrian, *Composition A: Composition with Black, Red, Grey, Yellow, and Blue* 1920, oil on canvas.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ A network of small museums based on artists' former homes or studios of which *atelier-cezanne* is one. (online) <http://artiststudiomuseum.org/studio-museums/> (accessed 7 July 2016)

Reflecting on the relativity²⁷² of the different colour areas, their positioning on the canvas and how they interact, Riley writes,

The colour planes take up different positions in space – some advance, some recede: and this is not a simple matter of a particular hue always taking up the same spatial position wherever it is present. It is a matter of context. Take the three yellows for example: the yellow in the top right corner is on a different plane from the yellow in the centre, and both of these are again on different planes from the yellow in the lower right. Although one customarily thinks of yellow as a light colour, these three yellows have different visual weights – that is to say, the block in the top right appears slightly heavier than the central yellow, which in turn weighs visually more than the yellow rectangle in the lower right. These three yellows, therefore, do two principle things simultaneously: they take up different spatial planes and they exert pressures through their different weights. The same applies to the reds, the blues and the blacks, and of course to the greys and the whites (although it is perhaps less easy to see). This brings about a field of forces in which the various weights and planes are building up dynamic relationships and tensions.²⁷³

Riley's thoughts on Mondrian's painting articulate a sensitivity to the relativity and instability of colour that is promoted by Josef Albers in his book *Interaction of Color*.²⁷⁴ A fellow artist sharing similar concerns in her own painting, Riley points out how Mondrian's interrelationship of colour juxtapositions brings about a spatial as well as surface tension. Following Riley,

Such dynamism could easily lead to a sort of visual anarchy. But Mondrian practices a form of ordering that he later refers to as 'the equivalence of the dissimilar'. The disparate visual qualities – each in itself completely 'real', or as he would say 'determinate' – are balanced in such a way that they both build a whole and yet retain their individuality.²⁷⁵ 'I have just got that large work right', he writes to van Doesburg about Composition A. 'I made that blue square on the right and changed that yellow one on the left to white: I painted over the grey, the black and the white. I wish you could see it like this.' And as the final result shows, he altered the painting again. In this way the 'equilibrated relationship' is achieved which, in his

²⁷¹ Piet Mondrian, 1920, (online image) <http://www.piet-mondrian.org/composition-number-2.jsp> (accessed 7 July 2016)

²⁷² Albers expands on the meaning of this term in relation to colour referring to its instability of value resulting from interaction and after - image, Albers, 1963, p. 71.

²⁷³ Bridget Riley, *Mondrian: Nature to Abstraction* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1997). I have been able to speak with Bridget Riley on several occasions about colour interaction and dynamics including after her talk at Tate Britain, 22 October 1997.

²⁷⁴ Albers 1963, p. 2.

²⁷⁵ Riley's footnote: Piet Mondrian, 'Towards the True Vision of Reality', as cited in Harry Holtzmann and Martin James (ed. and trans.) *The New Art – The New Life: The Collected Writings of Piet Mondrian*, (London: Thames and Hudson 1987), p. 338.

words, 'most purely expresses the universal, harmony, the unity that are proper to the spirit'. So anxious was he to preserve the individual characteristics within his unity that he worried for a while about the intensity of the large red in the lower left of the painting: 'I am not absolutely sure that it ought to be so totally homogenous. In theory it should be, but in practice...?' Eventually he decided to leave it.²⁷⁶

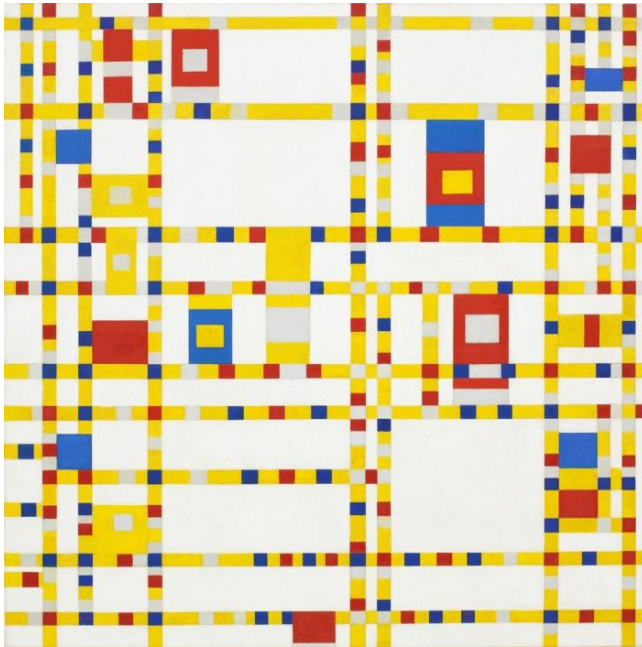


Fig. 43. Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942-43.²⁷⁷

Executed in his studio in New York, the two paintings *Broadway Boogie Woogie* and *Victory Boogie Woogie* are quite different to his earlier works. In my view, they reflect something of the frenetic, pulsating life of the modern city, while at the same time, the irregular, constantly shifting patterns of squares and rectangles call to mind the syncopated rhythms of jazz. Mondrian had a lifelong interest in music, which is reflected in his essays, and writes on *Neo-Plasticism: the General Principle of Plastic Equivalence*, on Neo-Plasticism and its realisation in music and theatre, and on Russolo's 'noise intoners' and of sounds and noise generally.²⁷⁸ Mondrian's words best communicate his feelings about colour and music,

Both noise and sound will be manifested as fundamental sound and fundamentally non-sound, like colour and non-colour...in neo-Plastic painting. Their number will be

²⁷⁶ Riley, 1997, p. 14.

²⁷⁷ Piet Mondrian, 1942-43, (online image) <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/78682> (accessed 7 July 2016)

²⁷⁸ Peter Vergo, *The Music of Painting: Music, Modernism and the Visual Arts*. (London and New York: Phaidon, 2010), p. 315, 316.

determined by practice: probably three sounds and three non sounds (as in painting: red, blue, yellow; white, black and gray).²⁷⁹

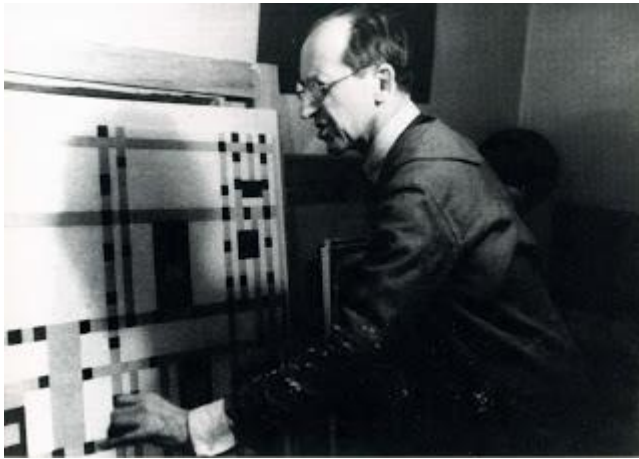


Fig. 44. Photograph of Piet Mondrian in his studio, 1943.²⁸⁰

True Boogie Woogie I conceive as homogenous in intention with mine in painting; destruction of melody, which is the equivalent with destruction of visual appearance, and construction through the continuous opposition of pure means – dynamic rhythm.²⁸¹

Dynamic rhythm is what happens between colours, particularly between opposite or complementary colours, Albers writes,

Colours present themselves in a continuous flux, constantly related to changing neighbours and changing conditions.

As a consequence, this proves for the reading of colour what Kandinsky often demanded for the reading of art: what counts is not the what but the how.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Holtzmann and James 1987, p. 162, cited in Vergo 2010, p. 317.

²⁸⁰ (Online image) <http://counterlightsrantsandblather1.blogspot.co.uk/2013/09/visiting-moma-with-my-camera.html> Mondrian painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* in his studio in New York in 1943. 'For Mondrian, this is a remarkably improvisational painting. He cut out and moved squares of construction paper (as he is seen doing here) until he got something that he wanted. He would remove the construction paper squares and paint in their colors'.

²⁸¹ An interview with Piet Mondrain' 1943 in Holtzmann and James 1987, cited in Vergo 2010, p. 320.

²⁸² Albers, 1963, p. 5.

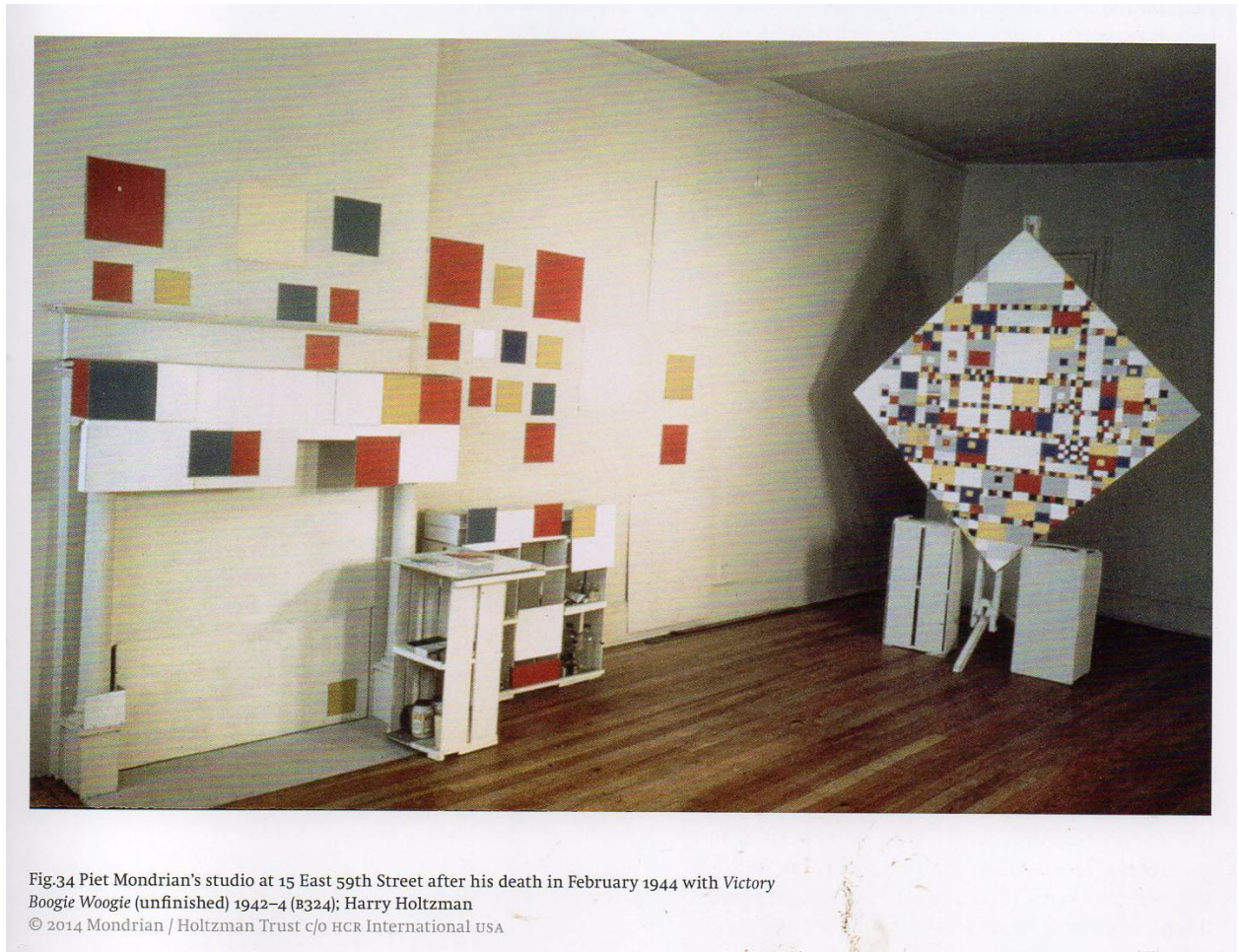


Fig. 45. Photograph of Piet Mondrian's studio in 1944.²⁸³

The photograph shows *Victory Boogie Woogie* on an easel in Mondrian's studio beside a wall arranged with coloured pieces of card. This module based form of composition and arrangement using cut and coloured paper is in this research project identified as the process of collage.

While the catalogue essayists make much of whether Mondrian worked horizontally on the table or vertically at the easel, what interests me in this photograph are the coloured pieces of card attached to the studio wall. From photographs of his studios it is clear that these wall arrangements provide Mondrian with opportunity to study colour juxtapositions and their interrelations. On card they can be moved around to test the results of different arrangements and alignments. This working process of temporary placing, bringing about new juxtapositions, arrangements and their resulting dynamic interplay is described by

²⁸³ Francesco Manacorda and Michael White eds. *Mondrian and his Studios: Colour in Space*. (London: Tate Publishing, 2014), p. 123.

Hans Jenson in his essay 'Working at the Table' where he describes the account of Charmion von Wiegand's visit to Mondrian's studio,

Her journal entry for 13 June 1942, says that she made a sketch in the subway on her way home that evening. The sketch documents the situation in the studio at the end of the afternoon. When she arrives there was tape on the canvas, but that is not to say that lines had already been painted. Interestingly, Mondrian and Von Wiegand spent the afternoon moving only three central lines and the vertical blue line on the right.

Von Wiegand describes how Mondrian changed the lines, moving them back and forth, and how he swapped the positions of the top and bottom lines in different colours by applying pieces of tape to the intersections.²⁸⁴

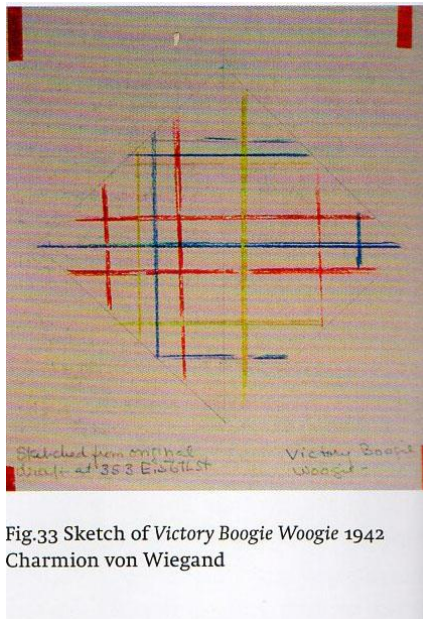


Fig. 46. Charmion von Wiegand, *Sketch of Victory Boogie Woogie*, 1942.²⁸⁵

What we are presented with in the photograph of Mondrian's studio with *Victory Boogie Woogie* is the final state of Mondrian's painting. Research has found that his working process follows a process of moving coloured squares and coloured line in the form of tape around and assessing the results brought about in the process. The final state of the painting is the result of a myriad of small decisions about relative colour, relative size, and relative positioning which together result in the composition of dynamic spatial relationships.

²⁸⁴ Hans Jenson 'Working at the Table' in Manacorda and White, 2014, p. 122.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

This is a surprising photograph of Bridget Riley in her studio showing a similar working process. The image presents the artist at her table with her prepared materials laid out in front of her.



Fig. 47. Bridget Riley in her studio, 1988.²⁸⁶

Riley has spoken and written extensively about her work,

There is seldom a single focal point in my paintings; generally, my paintings are multi-focal. You can't call it un-focused space, but not hold on a single focus is very much of our time...there was a time when focus could enable meanings to be found, reality to be fixed; when that sort of focus disappeared, meanings became difficult to fix. We are not concerned with a search for a focus because it is generally felt, I think, that a thing is no longer possible, and other ways of paying attention to things that matter have to be found.²⁸⁷

I discovered a well-known principle (it's always exciting when you find out things for yourself): that you cannot have movement without its opposite: stasis. There is no change without a constant. If you bring two things together in an image you have a dynamic, something that is not descriptive of movement, but gives a

²⁸⁶ Mel Gooding, *The Experience of Painting - Eight Modern Artists*. (London: South Bank Centre, 1988), p. 51.

²⁸⁷ Gooding, 1988, p. 50.

sensation of it...It is one thing against another. In the recent paintings it is the active diagonals that are countered by the static verticals.²⁸⁸

People thought at the time that they were paintings having something to do with optical experiments (an 'Op Art', and so on); really they were an attempt to say something about stabilities and instabilities, certainties and uncertainties. They were never simply about how fascinating it might be to take black and white and put them together into those optically dynamic configurations.²⁸⁹

It is interesting that at no point does Riley refer to the pieces of coloured paper or moving them around in the decision making process of composition. Perhaps because it is self-evident, one that is 'taken as read' and 'goes without saying'. Perhaps, it is that tacit knowledge that is absorbed in art school training.

It is informative to learn that Riley saw the exhibition 'The Developing Process' based on the ideas of teacher and writer Harry Thubron who taught at Leeds School of Art. Thubron tried to show how modern painting was evolving in America and other European countries than the UK. She also attended Thubron's summer school in Norfolk, where she met Maurice de Sausmarez, Thubron's assistant, the author of *Basic Design: The Dynamics of Visual Form*, which owes more than a nod to Bauhaus principles on which it is based.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Gooding, 1988, p. 54.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 55.

²⁹⁰ (online) <http://www.op-art.co.uk/bridget-riley/> (accessed 17 August 2016). Material from exhibition *The Developing Process* is held in the Tate Archive, Tate Britain, and in The National Arts Education Archive, now at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and has been seen in relation to other research interests.



Fig. 48. Josef Albers, Front cover for *Interaction of Colour*, 1963 edition.²⁹¹

Before moving to the US to teach at Black Mountain College, Albers taught at the German Bauhaus, and would have been familiar with Mondrian's work. It is more than a coincidence, that for his colour exercises compiled in *Interaction of Color*, Albers suggests the use of coloured paper over pigment and paint. The reasons he gives for this are practical, and, not least of all, is the ready availability of coloured paper found in printed material. Albers teaches that using coloured paper avoids the time consuming mixing of paint. By avoiding the frustrations of imperfect matching and spoiled materials, it maintains active engagement in the process. It permits repetition of exactly the same colour and surface quality. Apart from paste and razor (in preference to scissors) it eliminates tools and equipment for paint handling, and fifth, the use of colour paper avoids unnecessary addition of texture, such as brush marks, changes from wet to dry, and fluctuations in saturation. A further invaluable advantage Albers adds 'We can choose from a large collection of tones, displayed in front of us, and can thus constantly compare neighboring and contrasting colors. This offers a training which no palette can provide'.²⁹² All these reasons were not lost on either Mondrian or Riley in the construction of their colour compositions.

²⁹¹ Josef Albers, Front cover for *Interaction of Colour*. (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1963).

²⁹² Albers 1963, p. 6-7.

All three artists cited here, Cezanne, Mondrian and Riley show something of the process of structuring the grid, the first stage of graphic layout and arrangement of the page discussed by Samara. Both artist and designer make decisions regarding the grid format, contingent on the material at hand. For the artists included here, Cezanne, Mondrian and Riley, what is apparent is that the 'what' of design is less important than the 'how', and what the 'how' can suggest by way of prompting further moves or ideas, ones that do not follow a prescribed logic, but operate by intuition, association and a 'feel for the game'.

Grids and line, drawing and alignment

The artists that have most come to my attention during the course of this project when considering grids and alignment are Agnes Martin, James Hugonin and Sol LeWitt whose grids are constructed through drawing, and Rashid Rana whose photomontage collages are rigidly determined by the grid format. It is interesting to see Bridget Riley's preparatory studies structured on an underpinning grid are then developed with coloured paper in collage form. Finally, the collages of Mark Bradford, that utilise both line and module based grid forms.

For Agnes Martin, the 'blank slate' offered by the grid represented innocence, 'Well, when I first made a grid I happened to be thinking of the innocence of trees...and then this grid came into my mind and I thought it represented innocence'. On her painting she writes 'These paintings use little paint, little colour and simple hand-drawn marks, which simultaneously map and veil the surface'.²⁹³

Martin's grid is a distinctive set of alignment based relationships, sets of intersected parallel lines which serve to map the surface of the canvas.

²⁹³ Frances Morris and Tiffany Bell, eds. *Agnes Martin* (London: Tate Publishing, 2015), p. 26.

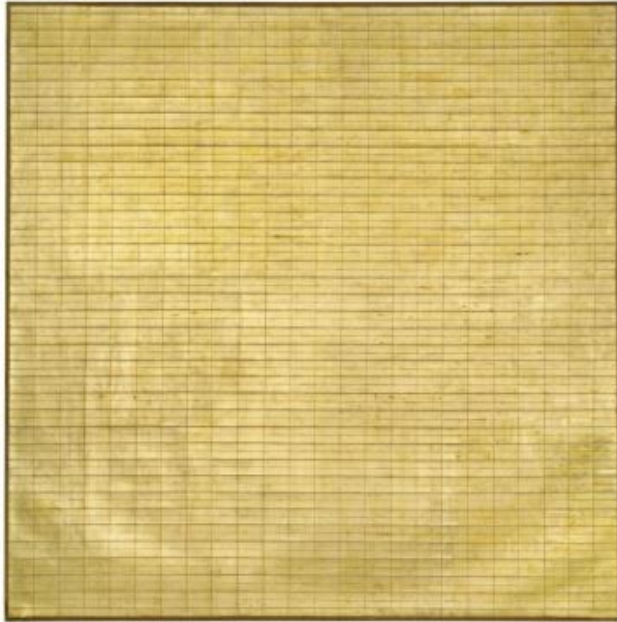


Fig. 49. Agnes Martin, *Friendship*, 1963.²⁹⁴

Six feet or larger, Martin's paintings are coloured fields, structured on an overall grid which is drawn directly on the surface of the canvas. In 'Friendship', the gesso surface is covered with gold leaf and incised with a fine grid.²⁹⁵

While Martin's grid is incised into the prepared gesso, Hugonin draws up his grid across the primed canvas, onto which he applies dabs paint of contrasting hue. The movement resulting from the interplay of complementary colours, brilliant yellow with neutral violet grey works against the tight grid to create a flickering tension of pattern and repetition.

²⁹⁴ Agnes Martin 1963, (online image) <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/agnes-martin> Tate Modern: Exhibition 3 June – 11 October 2015 (accessed 7 July 2016)

²⁹⁵ Morris and Bell 2015, p.27.



Fig. 50. James Hugonin in his studio 1989.²⁹⁶

Drawing up is a linear activity, predicated on careful calculations and a steady hand.

Hugonin writes,

I always work close up to the painting; when I am working I stand very close, so all the decisions are actually made very near to the painting...

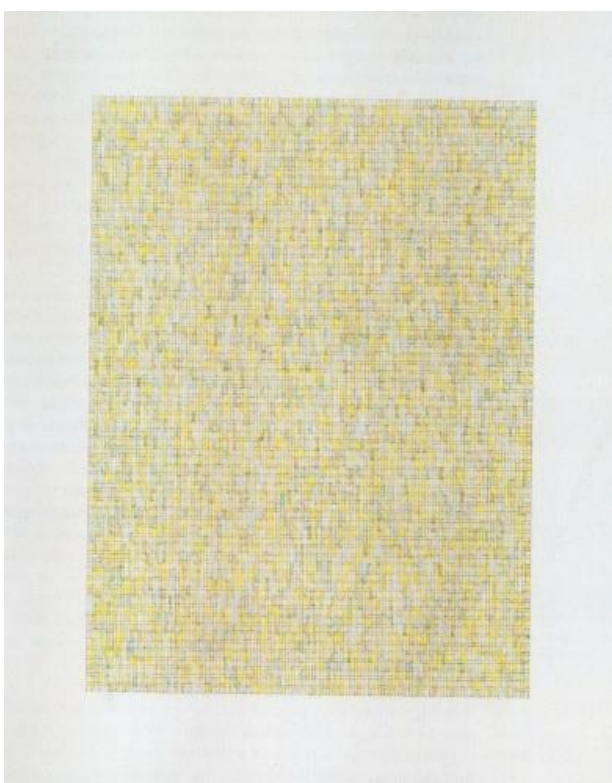


Fig. 51. James Hugonin, *Extract from Briggflatts IV*, 1987-88.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Gooding 1989, p. 27.

The grid I use as a forming principle, a structure to work with and against. It is a systematic structure imposed upon the surface, but if I use it inventively, it gives me tremendous freedom to create complexities of rhythm and pattern...I need something stable: the very regularity of the grid is needed to oppose the irregularities of the rhythms.²⁹⁸

The wall drawings of Sol LeWitt are often executed in silvery graphite, where the crisp clean lines are traced on a white wall following instruction of the artist. Linear alignments map the surface of the wall and construct a field of tonal gradations and linear tension.

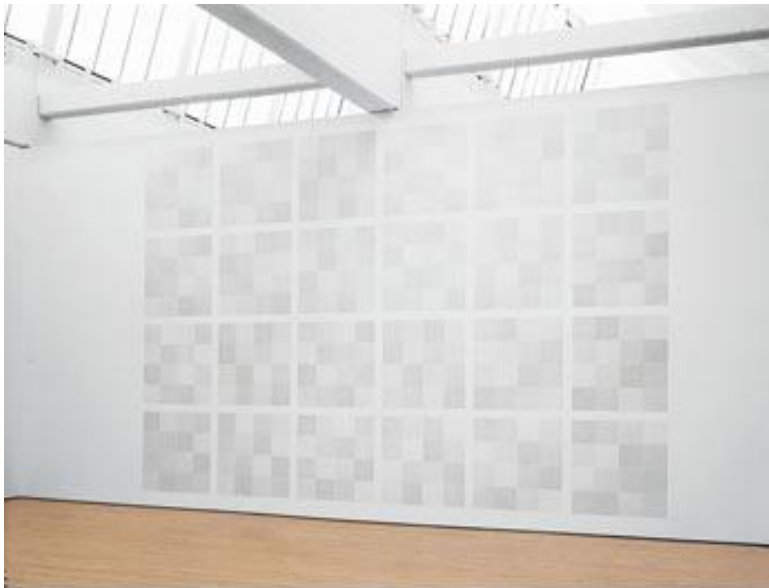


Fig. 52. Sol LeWitt *Wall Drawing #1085: Drawing Series-Composite, Part I–IV, #1–24, A+B, (detail)*, 1968/2003.²⁹⁹

The white of the wall continues inside the grid in the form of lattice structure, dividing the large scale module based wall composition into smaller square fields, each comprising of a further 25 smaller squares, the latter modules lacking the lattice structure of the larger form, abutt, to form a module of dynamic line-filled divisions. The movement arrived at by tonal variation works both locally within each lattice defined module as well as across the wider lattice field of the wall.

The three works by Martin, Hugonin and LeWitt, are all restrained, quiet manifestations of grids constructed by linear drawing, where the orthogonally intersecting parallel lines contain and determine the composition. Although built on the gridded surface of graph or

²⁹⁷ James Hugonin, 1987-88, in Gooding 1988, p. 29.

²⁹⁸ Hugonin 1988, p. 26.

²⁹⁹ (online image) <http://www.diaart.org/exhibitions/main/3> (accessed 17 August 2016)

layout paper, the preparatory designs of Bridget Riley are not contained but rather are supported by grid scaffolding. The crisp geometric designs for paintings are worked out in preparatory sketches and drawings. Riley writes

When I started to do studies at the beginning of the 1960s, few other artists made preparatory works. Most people felt that they were not spontaneous or sufficiently informal: it was thought that any form of preparedness was somehow a bit inartistic. But I felt – I didn't just feel, I knew – from all the evidence of what was to be seen in the museums that drawing and preparatory work has always played a large part of an artist's practice.³⁰⁰

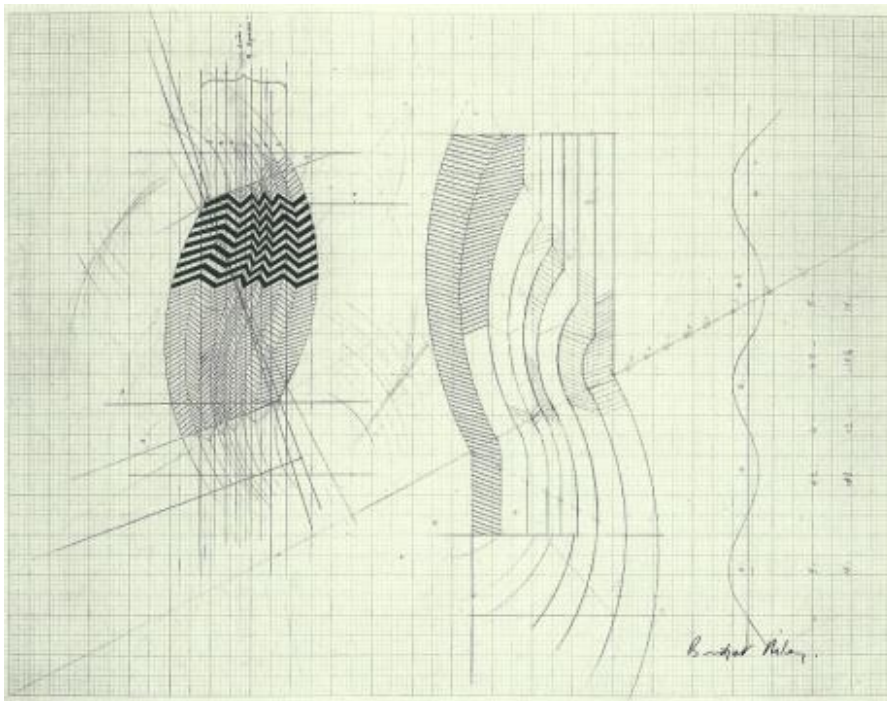


Fig. 53. Bridget Riley, *Stripes, Sketches*, 1964.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ Colin Wiggins, Michael Bracewell and Martha Prather Bridget Riley: Paintings and Related Work (London: national Gallery Company and Yale University Press, 2010), p. 16.

³⁰¹ (online image) <http://rebloggy.com/post/drawing-black-and-white-sketch-geometric-abstract-art-op-art-workspace-british-a/56186807107> (accessed 26 August 2016)

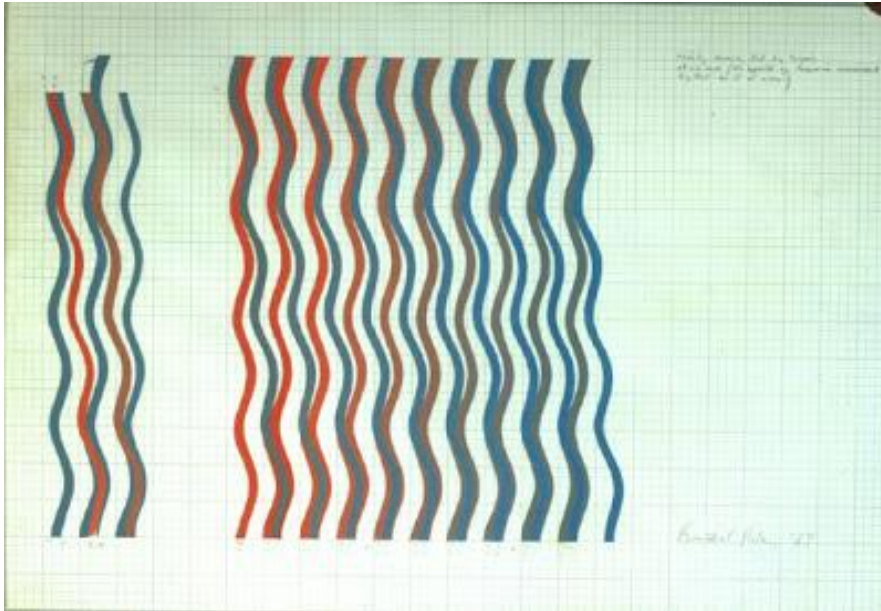


Fig. 54. Bridget Riley, *Preparatory Sketch*, 1967.³⁰²

These preparatory designs display the intricate workings and complex grid based calculations that underpin Riley's compositions and can be later recognised in the formal arrangement of her colour juxtapositions.



Fig. 55. Bridget Riley, *Collage Study, Bassacs, Further revision of June 11*, 2005.³⁰³

³⁰² (online Image) <http://opptg.blogspot.co.uk/2007/02/bridget-riley-paintings-and-works-on.html> (accessed 26 August 2016)

³⁰³ Wiggins, Bracewell and Prather 2010, p. 16.

Although Riley used collage as part of her preparatory work since the 1980s, it is not presented in the final finished work. Like many artists, both collage and grid structuring are used in preparatory studies, but are rarely evident and their joint use is not commented on in the final work. In *Collage Study, Bassacs, Further revision of June 11*, Riley uses the grid as invisible guide and collage a preliminary mode for constructing colour relations.

The example of digitally produced grids by Rashid Rana also utilise the distinct set of alignment based relationships of orthogonally intersecting parallel lines which serve to contain the multifarious photographs that comprise Rana's compositions.



Fig. 56. Rashid Rana featured in the front cover of New Art Exchange, 2012.³⁰⁴

Rana combines his own photography with images borrowed from pop culture and the digital world. Each photograph is re-cast as a pixel component, where micro content is at odds with the perceived bigger picture. In his work he uses the two dimensional grid as a device to pull his diverse ideas and themes together in a grid determined collage.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Front cover of New Art Exchange 'What's On' brochure 2012, featuring the exhibition 'Everything is happening at once', by Rashid Rana.

³⁰⁵ Notes from 'Rashid Rana in conversation with Shaheen Merali', 14 January 2012, New Art Exchange, Nottingham.

Although the photographic elements are strictly regimented, their colour produces a quality of subtle movement which compliments the sharp double reading of his often politicized content.

Although fractured, the grid forms in Bradford's paintings are far from superficial or decorative. His composition comprises drawn line and collaged modules, where the edges of his rectangular modules provide myriads of possible mini alignments, some aligned in small arrays and others independent co-ordinates featuring in unaligned accumulations. Living and working in Los Angeles, Bradford graduated from the California Institute of the Arts; he has an increasing international presence in the art world, and recently in the UK, in relation to his community arts projects.³⁰⁶

Interested in strategies of mapping and the psychogeography of his home city, Bradford uses his characteristic painting style to excavate the emotional, political and actual terrain that he inhabits.³⁰⁷ Working in both paint and collage, Bradford incorporates elements from his daily life into his canvases: remnants of found posters and billboards, graffitied stencils and logos, and hairdresser's permanent endpapers he's collected from his other profession as a stylist.³⁰⁸

In the composition *Kryptonite*, Bradford employs two types of grids, the first, a background linear grid comprising vertically spaced black parallel lines are intersected by a series of irregularly spaced, mostly horizontal lines against a white ground, into and on top of which are placed the second comprising several arrays and runs of modules that, unrestricted by any line based structure, are either collaged or traced on top. Unlike earlier grids of Martin, Hugonin, Riley or Rana, no single grid guides the composition, or functions to regiment its contained module forms. Instead, Bradford's lines and modules work independently of each other, in a composition of many grids, partial grids, unstructured textures and markings.

³⁰⁶ BBC Artsnight Series 3 Nicholas Serota, first aired 13 May 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03v1pb4> (accessed 17 August 2016),

³⁰⁷ <https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2015/mark-bradford-scorched-earth/>

³⁰⁸ Christopher Bedford, *Mark Bradford*. (New Haven, USA: Yale University Press, 2010).

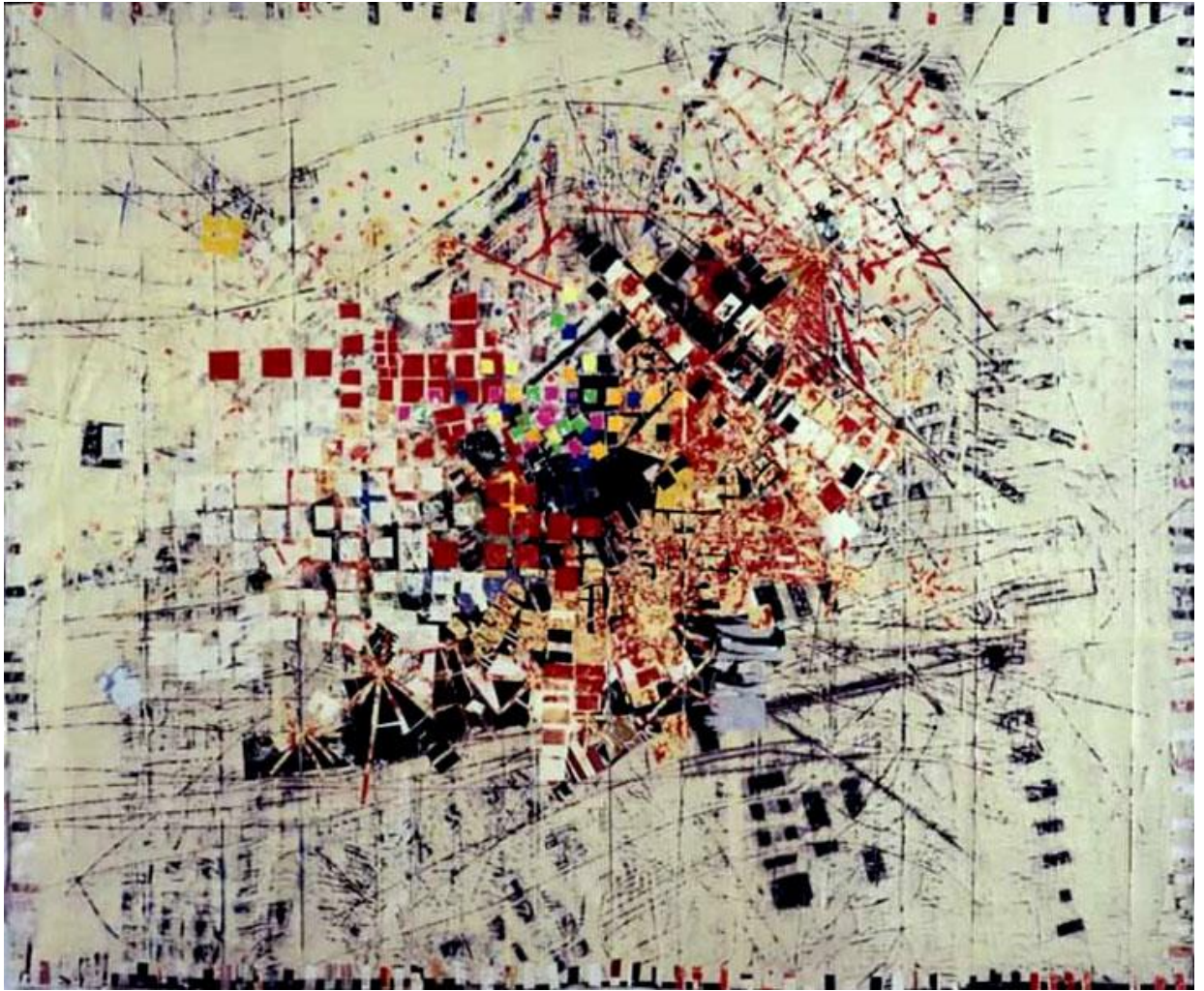


Fig. 57. Mark Bradford, *Kryptonite*, 2006. Mixed media, collage on paper, 2490 x 3010 mm.³⁰⁹

Saatchi Gallery Online notes,

Using collage and paint on paper, Mark Bradford's *Kryptonite* possesses an organic quality in its grid-like composition. Its convoluted architecture and overlapping details radiate as a megalopolis sprawl, a seething microcosm of activity. Often compared to Piet Mondrian, Bradford gives modernism's vision of an ordered utopia a lethal reality check as hard-edged borders and harmonious planes are exchanged for independent non-defined forms engaging in unruly turf-war. Evolving his surface as a highly textured topography, Bradford uses gesture and

³⁰⁹ Mark Bradford 2006 (online image)

http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/mark_bradford_kryptonite.htm (accessed 7 July 2016)

mark-making to encapsulate the dissonance and excitement of a metropolitan landscape.³¹⁰

What is presented is a looser, less fixed metropolitan terrain to that of Mondrian's *Boogie Woogie* paintings, although the coloured arrays of partial grids maintain interplay of broken syncopated rhythms, scratchings and other sounds against the vague suggestion of a partially constructed background.

In contrast, the composition of *Los Moscos* is an almost entirely module based composition, at least, without any guidelines of an underpinning grid. Myriads of small rectangular modules jostle one another, moth like against the light of a lamp, where the overriding majority of black modules overlap the lighter and mainly yellow ones in a predominantly vertically orthogonal night-like arrangement. Some subdued patches of pink, orange and red dispersed across the surface punctuate the darkness, together with fragments of letter forms.



Fig. 58. Mark Bradford, *Los Moscos*, 2004. Mixed media on canvas, 3175 x 4839 mm.³¹¹

³¹⁰ Saatchi Gallery, notes on *Kryptonite*, (online)
[http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/mark bradford kryptonite.htm](http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/mark_br Bradford_kryptonite.htm) (accessed 7 July 2016)

Tate Gallery Online Display Caption for Los Moscos tells us

Evoking aerial maps of urban areas, this abstract collage includes materials found by Bradford on the streets around his Los Angeles studio. His method involves soaking, bleaching, tearing and sanding the paper, emphasising its physicality. He has likened this process to ‘those tagged up, repainted, tagged up, sanded, and repainted walls you pass every day in the street’ and to the handmade posters he appropriates for his canvases ‘which act as memory of things pasted and things past’. The title, which means ‘the flies’, is derogatory slang for migrant day labourers in the San Francisco Bay Area.

While captions and online notes can inform and contextualise a work, there is no substitute for paying attention to the works themselves. On looking at paintings and reflecting on his CalArts training, Bradford acknowledges being taught the ‘theory of’ was never actually *looking at* painting. In interview with Carol Eliel, *Dynamism and Whispers*, Bradford talks of having a ‘very twenty-first—century education – a very theoretical education’, and Eliel concludes,

So it’s almost as if you developed your vocabulary and then after the fact saw certain things and realised that there were connections and then started to look into them. So it’s not influence but more of a coalescence of aesthetics or something like that.³¹²

Bradford responds with discussion including reference to Schwitters, de Kooning, Pollock and Rauschenberg, where he is ready to discuss processes of collage developed in his work. Apart from a reference to Diebenkorn’s linear arrangement of colours of *Ocean Park* and the repetition of Donald Judd’s *Untitled (Stack)*, 1967, no other references are made to artists and their use of grid forms, by Bedford or his contributors when writing on Mark Bradford.

³¹¹ Mark Bradford 2004, (online image) <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/mark-bradford-9242> (accessed 7 July 2016)

³¹² Eliel in Bedford, 2010, p. 58.



Fig. 59. Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park No. 83*, 1975.³¹³ Fig. 60. Donald Judd, *Untitled (Stack)* 1967.³¹⁴

There is less reticence, however, in the discussion of Bradford's work in relation to collage. In his essay 'Move with Chance', Richard Schiff's addresses sections on material realism, intuition, repetition and chance. In *Los Moscos*, Bradford is 'rendering tactile materiality visible', where 'One material, one movement, one rhythm enters into exchange with another material, movement or rhythm'.³¹⁵ Notwithstanding the theoretical lessons, he quotes Bradford as saying,

It was revolutionary for me that you could put two things together based on your desire for them to be together...They're together because you say so.³¹⁶

Premised on the 'free exchange' he perceives in social life,

Fluidity, juxtapositions, cultural borrowing – they've all been going on for centuries. The only authenticity there is what I put together.³¹⁷

To which Schiff concludes, 'By his movements, he himself is chance', at once attributing/associating the random of collage to human action and conscious decision.

³¹³ (online image) <http://socialindc.com/richard-diebenkorn-the-ocean-park-series/>

³¹⁴ (online image) http://www.moma.org/wp/moma_learning/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Donald-Judd.-Untitled-Stacks-234x395.jpg

³¹⁵ Schiff in Bedford 2010, p. 80.

³¹⁶ Bradford cited by Schiff in Bedford 2010, p. 80.

³¹⁷ Bradford cited by Schiff in Bedford, 2010, p. 82.

In a rare mention of the grid, Schiff suggests that Bradford's working method using locally sourced materials of hair salon 'beauty paper' be described as a 'neighbourhood version of downtown minimalism', and, in a possible critique of the digital, points to the active role played by concrete material in art practice,

The placement of collage elements – one thing after another – isolates the physicality of each while producing a coarse digital grid. Here the picture elements (the paper bits) are not passive pixels that yield to a comprehensive image, but material things that would vie with such an image for sensory attention.³¹⁸

A fuller discussion of Mark Bradford's oeuvre is outside the remit of this contextual discussion and has been covered elsewhere. A final quote worth adding is Schiff commenting on intuition in Bradford's working method, which he describes in terms of 'manual intuition', a tacit reflexivity that is 'active yet has a reactive what-have-I-done aspect'. Schiff writes,

An intuition has no identifiable cause in a person's knowledge, whether mental or physical. Acting on your manual intuition is a guess, a hypothesis of uncertain outcome in relation to materials with which you collaborate. Even Bradford is responsible for many of the qualities of the materials to begin with – preparing them for use by cutting, tearing, bleaching and so forth – it is worth reiterating that the materials may be forming him as much as he is forming them.³¹⁹

From Schiff's account of Bradford's working method, the process he identifies as 'acting on manual intuition' suggests a form of immediate decision-making of improvisation, of working with established methods and strategies in a spontaneous and impromptu extemporizing based on a 'feel for the game'. Schiff's final and seemingly throwaway comment regarding reciprocal composition is one that I shall return to later.

Summary: On Grids

Contextual discussion on grids raises issues of structure and structuring at many levels. These include the structure and structuring of thought, the page, of perspective, representation and of relationships. An inherited established system, a structural device for ordering, an organising principle of alignment to guide and map relations, each grid is determined by those who use it. The grid sets up relationships, it links together as well as distinguishing difference. The grid has been put to use in many ways; its forms have been apportioned meaning, and used to represent ideas, qualities and worldviews. While

³¹⁸ Schiff in Bedford, 2010, p. 83.

³¹⁹ Bedford, 2010, p. 79.

retaining its basic typology, the grid is open to change and reconfiguration dependent on the use to which it has been put.

The field for grids is premised on mathematics and geometry, linear ordering and alignment. Sets of orthogonally intersecting parallel lines produce sets of aligned rectilinear modules, which together constitute the grid form. Paradoxically, in dividing up the field, the grid also links together. It is a powerful aligning structure and system. Constructed geometrically, it is closely associated with the operations of linear logic, which are also mental processes. Conversely, thinking and reasoning have become defined by geometry and the process of reductive abstraction, which in turn have contributed to a reduced and insufficient image of human being.

Sidestepping issues of representation, this approach deals with the effects of formal composition, of dynamic spatial relationships and structural tensions set up by colour interaction and linear alignment. Closer study of artist and designers' working methods reveal the mapping and structuring of not just one but many grids, in a process of decision-making and alteration dealing with stabilities and instabilities, certainty and uncertainty. It also shows that these taught and learned methods and processes are often not reported, they are overlooked. 'Taken as read', or 'goes without saying', they are part of devising and making, the thinking journey of constructive problem-solving, rather than the final destination of finished work.

Reflections on working methods of artists and designers reveal not what, but how grids structure relationships, and how mapping operates through the correlations of alignment, and the resulting dynamics of interplay and exchange. It shows how these properties are activated through human intention and decision making processes that shape the designer as much as the designed.

Grids and collagegrids

Collagegrids utilises the mapping function of the field based grids system to set up and coordinate spatial relationships between physical points on the canvas plane. Collagegrids does not attempt a recording of visual reality; rather, it constructs reality by selection and modification of existing systems of relations, assembling them into the new field of the contingent present. My concern lies not in surface features or appearance but in the dynamics of bringing together, the interplay of different entities, of the known and not yet known, through art practice. While acknowledging Descartes rules for acquiring

knowledge, collagegrids contests this mode of geometric, reductive abstraction as the only process of rational, logical thinking, and adds non-linear processes of overlapping and juxtaposition. The project deals in a linear construction of sequential events of journaling, while engaging with the non-linearity of simultaneous happening, of events occurring at the same time.

In response to Williamson's account of the post-modern grid, for collagegrids, the grid system, or rather grid systems provide the material for structuring, where manually produced forms and expressive gestures are utilised alongside the geometric. The former, however, are not aligned with the irrational or sub consciousness bursting forth onto the canvas surface. The hand produced forms and gestures are primary alignments, building links and connections with the partially sensed and felt and material form through concrete lived experience, where human behaviour is not determined but constrained and enabled by the environment. Collagegrids is constructed by an individual operating autonomously within a dynamic social and political context. Collagegrids surfaces are not superficial, but are at once in a state of emergence and fluctuation. Questions of truth and falsity cannot be applied to any state of collagegrids as there is nothing external to serve against which they can be judged, except each other. For collagegrids the surface does not hide or reveal anything. It creatively rather than functionally relates inside and out, idea with material, not in a single one way process, or contradictory and discontinuous, but an interplay of one with the other. In collagegrids the partial fragments of grids are not correlated with destruction of the field of the rational mind or with Freudian sub consciousness, but with the found materials of composition. There is no single gridded surface that correlates with rationality, but a composition of many codes and systems. Collagegrids construct orientations and attractions other than gravity. No partial grid or module is free floating, they are handled and aligned by someone; and assembled, they occupy the same time and spatial area as others with which they are linked and connected. It does not function as disembodied consciousness but is a thinking process.

By acknowledging the pivotal position of the activating human in practice, this project goes beyond the limitations of modernism and post-modernism, of the insufficient image they provide of human being.

Discussion 1c: collage and grids

Accumulative, fragmentary, and heterogeneous, collage is a transdisciplinary process, where abrupt juxtapositions of fragments, of images and words, removed from familiar contexts gives rise to unexpected new meanings. Arising from juxtaposition, the double status of collage results in polyvalence and the simultaneity of multiple readings and meaning, that collapses past and present, time and place while constructing new heterogeneous space that is complex and complicated, promoting buffering zones of intersection, osmosis and exchange. It is a discursive formulation, a critical tool and method. It does not reproduce or reflect but brings together in a conscious act of construction, through choice, modification and distribution of materials. Acted out in a specific time and place with contingent material, the artist and viewer are live agents of construction, and while not innately subversive, collage brings about change by constructing the new. Unlike traditional painting and philosophy, collage is not premised on correspondence of the similar but on the juxtaposition of difference by logic of association. A process of non-linear thinking, collage is an intermediary practice, where synthesis of possibilities from each field provides a means of creating exciting new work. Operating with apparent freedom and lack of boundary, collage is a contingent, composite, and inclusive reordering which constructs newly possible interventions and change.

However, as with collage, which is understood as noun and verb, object and activity, so too, it is possible to understand grids in terms of activity. Presented as structure or structures, as already formed, the 'look of thought' that they 'represent', is always prior, with logic arrived at through reductive abstraction of the field into parallel lines and the mapped coordinates of their intersection. As compositional devices, providing systems of order and ordering, these structures of the inherited found offer stability, regularity, conformity, and accountability. They identify,³²⁰ they map a field, and make sense and meaning by constructing relationships, making links and connections, through the coordinating features of alignment.

Qualities of collage, those of apparent freedom and lack of boundary, are often attributed to artists, while those of grids, the disciplined, systematic and formalised, are associated

³²⁰ See the BBC Reith Lectures 2017, 'Mistaken Identities' by Kwame Anthony Appiah.

with academic research. These qualities, of collage and of grids, are not inherently fixed but are both subject to the uses to which they are put.

Collagegrids is the interplay of these two fields, constructed through reflexive deliberation of practice. Accumulative, fragmentary and heterogeneous, collagegrids constructs a composite field of complex relationships. Partial fragmentary structures and independent forms are brought into association through the generative and reciprocal alignment of concerns and projects, where artwork composes the person as much as the person does the artwork.

Historiography of art history shows its methodologies and artistic analysis premised on prevailing theories of how the world is. Williamson points to religious underpinnings of medieval book illustration, the Cartesian logic of crisp and pared down Modernist design, the subrational, sub conscious nihilism of Surrealist projects and much of the Post-Modern. *Methodologies of Art* are those belonging to art history, of formalism and style, iconography, approaches of Marxism and Feminism, Biography and Autobiography, Semiotics of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, and Aesthetics. To which list are added further interpretive tools of Visual Culture, *Visual Methodologies* of content analysis, discourse analysis, audience studies, and anthropological approach. These are the tools of 'artistic analysis' of the art object.

What these 'divining rods of meaning'³²¹ do not provide is theory of how the world is in practice. In paying attention solely to the object, what they do not address are processes of making, or theorising the 'how' of the decision and sense making of practice. What the examples provided indicate, of the working processes of Cezanne, Mondrian, Riley, Albers, Hugonin, Bradford, together with Ernst, Schwitters, Müller, is the artists' engagement with materials, and a decision – making of material handling, which evidences thinking through practice. This calls for a theory of practice that focusses primarily on process, and accommodates an insider approach to practice.

³²¹ Laurie Schneider Adams *The Methodologies of Art* (Colorado, USA and Oxford UK: Westview Press, 1996) and (online) <https://westviewpress.com/books/the-methodologies-of-art/> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007).

Discussion 2: towards a theory of practice

Premised on the primacy of practice, this section constructs a theory of practice for collage grids which accommodates processes of artistic making. It theorises the 'how' of decision making and sense making, asserting that human being is the activating agent, the mediator and the *through* of practice.³²²

The collage grids project draws on practice and the issues and concerns arising from practice, and approaches this from the position of insider.³²³ The findings of practice presented by the commentary identify the thinking process of collage grids; an interplay of material with ideas through a reflexive and cumulative decision making process. Contingent, composite and inclusive, it is aligned with personal concerns and projects. It is premised on the resolution of tension arising from juxtaposition of difference, on a logic of constructing association, of making links and connections. The facilitating mode or mediating role of interplay is the deciding process, the *through* of practice.

This project seeks a way of understanding and theorising collage grids where practice is the object of study and not its social systems³²⁴ or the phenomenological self.³²⁵ Recognising the limited role accorded the artist in modernism, postmodernism and much of the contemporaneous,³²⁶ and in defiance of Barthes,³²⁷ it becomes necessary to identify and

³²² An earlier version of this section was published in JVAP, Eisner, C. (2016). Collage grids: generative metaphor and emergent composition. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 50-62.

³²³ Insider position is described earlier as relating to position in relation to discourse.

³²⁴ Peter Osborne, *Anywhere Or Not At All, Philosophy of Contemporary Art*. (London and New York: Verso, 2013), Margriet Schavemaker & Mischa Rakier, eds. (2007). *Right About Now. Art and Theory since the 90's*. Amsterdam: Valiz.

³²⁵ Maurice Merleau Ponty, (1962), *The Primacy of Perception*. London, New York: Routledge. Riley, B. (1999). *The Eye's Mind: Collected Writings 1965-1999*. London and Leicester: Thames and Hudson, Serpentine Gallery and De Montfort University.

³²⁶ Jacques Ranciere, (2007). *Misadventures of Universality: Symposium on Philosophy*. Retrieved from The Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art: http://2nd.moscowbiennale.ru/en/ranciere_report_en/ Hito Steyerl, (2002, Sept). *The Articulation of Protest Trans Derieg*, A. Retrieved from http://subsol.c3hu/subsol_contributors3/steueritext2.html, Jack H. Williamson, (1986). The Grid: History, Use and Meaning. *Design Issues*, Vol 3, No 2, 15-30. Timothy Samara, *Making and Breaking the Grid: A Graphic Design Layout Workshop*. (Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2002).

³²⁷ Barthes, 1967, Death of the Author who argues that writing and its creator are unrelated. Accessed 3 August 2016 http://www.tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/death_authorbarthes.pdf

theorise the role of 'the hidden hand'³²⁸ of practice, the artist and decision-maker. By correlating existing writing on practice, of Bourdieu and Archer, I put together a theory of practice for collage grids which places human agency at its centre.

Inherited tradition and human agency

The journals of active documentation record the behaviours, strategies and actions of making and articulate the thinking that takes place in practice. That which is inherited in practice Bourdieu identifies as the 'habitus', or 'systems of durable, transferable dispositions', structuring structures. These are grounded in experience and everyday life and function as 'principles of the generation and structuring of practices'. The habitus is the source of the moves, the strategies from which the practice is generated, and generated from within the process, 'constructing their generative principle by situating itself from within the very movement of their accomplishment', within the movement that is making.

³²⁹ Collage grids practice draws on the behaviours and strategies of collage and the principles and alignments of grids. Taught in art schools, this behaviour and thinking is a tacit knowledge, one that more often than not, 'goes without saying' or is 'taken as read'.

Bourdieu's habitus does not account for change or structuring strategies beyond that which is inherited because it is predicated on the replication of the stability and constancy of the social and cultural world to which it belongs. The role ascribed by Bourdieu to agency is one which 'encourages us to behave in ways that reproduce the existing practices and hence the existing structure of society'.³³⁰ In *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*, Margaret Archer studies aspects that are not defined by the socially structured situation, that which is personal and individual to practice. She argues that 'it is through the activities of embodied practice that we develop the powers of thought at all'³³¹ and rejects contemporary social theory that seeks to diminish human properties and powers. I come to a parallel conclusion in Primary Research Finding 4 concerning the contingency of sense and feeling.³³² In reclaiming the personal in agency, she recognises the primacy of practice.

³²⁸ Cilla Chapman, 'Collage: Politics and Aesthetics' (unpublished master's dissertation, University of Lincoln, 2009).

³²⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Trans. Nice, R. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 72.

³³⁰ Dave Elder-Vass, "Reconciling Archer and Bourdieu in an Emergentist Theory of Action" *American Sociological Association* 25: 4, (2007), p. 325-356. Literature Online.

³³¹ Archer, M. *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), p. 146.

³³² Primary Research Finding 4, Commentary p. 51.

Archer refutes Lyotard's position that 'a self does not amount to much',³³³ and what she refers to as the 'social imperialism and linguistic terrorism' of postmodernism. She argues that postmodernism not only asserts the primacy of linguistic structure over agency, it ultimately seeks to dissolve the human subject entirely. Instead of reinstating Enlightenment and Positivist Man with his incorporeal consciousness, 'Gods eye view' and an 'outsider' standpoint which promotes the separation of humanity from the non-human or 'natural' world, Archer³³⁴ argues that human agents possess properties and powers, such as thinking, deliberating, believing, intending, loving and so forth, which are applicable to people but never to social structures or cultural systems. It is these properties, Archer asserts, which enable the individual to act 'so rather than otherwise' in situations, guided by the person's own concerns and projects.³³⁵ She points out that it is humans who have ideas and that social structures do not. Archer proposes that structures and human agency together determine society's trajectory, where the self is not universally given, but is contingently made.³³⁶

Archer defends 'that....which is indeed inner and private, but is much better captured by conceptualising it as the "inner conversation", whose reporting has nothing to do with observational reports'.³³⁷ Archer rejects the observational model of self-awareness and its fundamental assumption that we cannot be observer and the observed at the same time. She argues that of the five senses, it is only the eye that cannot see itself seeing without the aid of a mirror to bring the observer (subject) together with the observed (object), noting that we are simultaneously subject and object when using our other senses, 'when we wash our faces, try out a new perfume, test our own cooking, hear our own voices, or have a cold and feel dreadful'. Archer replaces the observational model of self-awareness, of sight, with that of hearing. The shift in position that takes place is one from a passive 'looking in' to one of active participation: of speaking, listening and responding.³³⁸ Archer's model is premised on an internal differentiation of the self, into the 'Me', my past, the 'I' of the immediate self, and the future, 'You', where the parts can converse with each other.³³⁹ In reflexive deliberation, the internal conversation is dependent on temporality, operating

³³³ Lyotard, J-F. *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1979), p. 15.

³³⁴ Margaret Archer, *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003) p. 2.

³³⁵ This is Primary Research Finding 1. Commentary, p. 47.

³³⁶ Archer, 2003, p. 23.

³³⁷ Ibid. p. 22.

³³⁸ Ibid. p. 54.

³³⁹ Ibid. p. 71.

over the different tracts of time. Courses of action are produced ‘through’ deliberation. They include planning, rehearsing, mulling over, deciding, prioritising, imagining, clarifying and re-living, all of which constitute mental activities of internal conversation.³⁴⁰ It is this fully engaged and active human agent that I refer to as the natural human. Through practice, the natural human engages with the social person, to provide an extended and expanded image of human being.

This research foregrounds the process of *through* that Archer identifies. Inherited tradition as identified in Bourdieu’s social structure is embedded in the learned and tacit strategies of practice. Change comes about as a result of the ‘because’ rather than the random side effects of causal events,³⁴¹ and crucially, this is mediated by human agency. By exploring the correlation of theory and practice through reflections on the collage grids project, this research asserts the primacy of practice in the construction of new theory, where theory is embedded in practice, in its inherited behaviours, strategies and actions, and the associations, links and connections made with the work of others. Following Bourdieu, the logic of practice is its temporality.³⁴² Theory is drawn from practice through a process of detemporalisation, creating a set of relations not possible in practice, ‘a forced synchronisation of the successive, fictitious totalisation, neutralisation of functions, substitution of the system of products for the systems of production’.³⁴³ By removing time, the movement that is collage grids practice is replaced by a set of products, the outcomes of practice, its artefacts and journals. Following Archer, all ideas begin life as thoughts, someone has to have them and unless they are publically shared, they remain private. Ideas about the inner conversation can be extracted and articulated, and are shared by publishing them.³⁴⁴ Externalised, the open fluid deliberations of practice are replaced by systems of chronologically documented thoughts, which aligned with personal concerns and projects, are assembled into ideas. The theorising effect extinguishes the ‘Me’, ‘I’ and ‘You’ of conversation rendering all internal thinking, that is the mode of production, into external formalised ideas, products which then take on a life of their own to take up their abode as new ‘theory’, contributing to the ‘Universal Library of Humankind’ that is knowledge.³⁴⁵ Theory is embedded in practice and is the result of practice, where the

³⁴⁰ Archer, p. 161.

³⁴¹ Margaret Archer in discussion with the author, 1 August 2016.

³⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

³⁴³ Bourdieu 1972.

³⁴⁴ Margaret Archer, "Reflexivity", *Sociopedia.isa*, (2010) p. 1-13, Online Literature.

³⁴⁵ Archer (2003), Archer’s Universal Library is inclusive of gallery space.

‘through’ of reflexive deliberation is the ‘through’ of Macleod and Holdridge’s title, ‘Thinking through Art’.³⁴⁶

This theory of practice acknowledges both empirical, ‘outer’ public socially structured discourse and ‘inner’ private internal conversation. It is this double approach that is respected in the connective model for this written exegesis. Recognising that which is both natural and private, it articulates the personal of practice and accounts for an ‘insider’ approach to practice-led research that not a study of self but the study of practice that is inclusive of the natural self.³⁴⁷ The thinking process of collage grids includes and modifies the found natural as much as it utilises the inherited found.

Themes of collage and grids can be traced in this discussion of structure and agency, where grids assume the fixed structure of the inherited found, the coordinating features of alignment, and collage, the contingent, composite and inclusive re-ordering, making newly possible intervention and change, which, crucially, is mediated by the conversation of human agency. It is at this crux, the interplay of grids and collage, that the *through* of my collage grids practice is insistent and investigates.

³⁴⁶ Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, *Thinking Through Art*. (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006).

Discussion 3: thinking it through

To assert the primacy of practice is a refusal to accord primacy to language and this is what is maintained in relation to the emergence of self-consciousness. The effect of asserting this is to make the embodied practices of human beings in the world more important than their social relations for the emergence of self-hood, meaning a continuous sense of self, and for the development of its properties and powers, meaning reflexivity, which only exists *in potentia* for every neonate.³⁴⁸

Asserting the primacy of practice, this research places human agency at its centre, and acknowledges the inseparability of the 'human' and 'natural' world. It recognises that the human cannot operate outside the environment, which provides much more than a backdrop to practice.³⁴⁹ Instead of conceiving of embodied mind and embodied practice, this projects asserts the indivisibility of mind and body, of the human and natural world and asserts 'thought' that is firmly anchored in and cannot bypass it's naturally situated processing human agent. It is in this sense that artwork is first and foremost a thinking process, one of deliberation and decision making.³⁵⁰ This research acknowledges the osmosis of practice to the lived experience of the 'found', and insists on the 'I' of the 'inner' natural as well as 'outer' social person in constituting what we call knowledge. Returning to collage grids, this discussion explores structure and agency as presented by grids and collage in practice, identifying in grids inherited and found structure and in collage new possibility inherent in transformational change. And, crucially, these are activated by human agency and aligned with personal concerns and projects.

Far from being a transcription of internal speech, the notes contained in the journal contain part of a conversation, another part of which is indicated by the photographs. Neither does the artefact contain, embody or embed thinking. The 'final finished' artefact retains traces of this conversation and presents its outcome. Not found exhaustively in the journal notes,

³⁴⁸ Margaret Archer, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 121.

³⁴⁹ Linda Cracknell, 'Nature more than a backdrop in writing', Letters, *Saturday Guardian*, (30 July 2016), cites Jessie Kesson who writes, 'I carry climates within me'.

³⁵⁰ This is articulated in Primary Research Finding 7. Commentary, p. 54.

thinking can be traced through the journal entries and studio photographs presented by Volume One. It is the piecing together and relating; the back and forth movement of noticing and inspection. It is the sensing this and doing that, of looking on this and then on that, of linking together and connecting; it is simultaneous pattern forming, imagining and association building, in the calling to mind, in the fundamentally constructive processing, of making sense. Thinking is noticing, paying attention and is alert. It flickers and fluctuates; it is focussed and de-centred, concentrated and dispersed. It is simultaneous and sequential. It resides in the specific forms of planning, rehearsing, mulling-over, deciding, prioritising, imagining, clarifying, reliving and improvising, playing of art, articulated in the aligned collage of writing, photographs and found material that comprises the journals and Volume One.

Following Archer, courses of action are produced ‘through’ deliberation. The reflexive deliberations of internal conversation are the mediating ‘through’ of thinking ‘through’ art. The properties and powers of reflexive deliberation are the ‘because’ rather than the ‘cause’ of practice.³⁵¹ They include planning, rehearsing, mulling-over, deciding, prioritising, imagining, clarifying, and re-living, all of which constitute mental activities of internal conversation.³⁵² From my commentary I add courses of action of collecting, selecting and modifying, juxtaposing and overlapping, assembling and alignment of collage and grids, together with improvising and playing, which are not without thought, or mental activity. When scrutinized, the deliberative actions can be traced in the journals and *Volume One*, and are summed up in the image of glue brush pot, tray of cut out squares and open journal.³⁵³ These courses of action are findings about deliberation, about process, drawn from studio practice. Each is addressed in the following paragraphs.

Planning – this entails designing or working out in advance a systematic arrangement of elements or important parts and produces a proposal for an intended course of action. This forethought is found in the planning of dimensions for the sun baffle for studio skylight p. 24, layout for poster p. 11, calculating stretcher size p. 26, calculating width of panels for studio wall, planning the positioning of text p. 90, its review p. 115, and the positioning of the rain event p. 83.

Rehearsing –meaning to state or practise in advance, to list or itemize, detail, spell out, set out, to prepare by playing out in advance, to run through. This is understood in terms of the

³⁵¹ In discussion with Margaret Archer, unpublished conversation, 1 August 2016.

³⁵² Archer (2003) p. 161.

³⁵³ *Volume One* p. 159.

initial studies p. 37, 38, and 39, which rehearse and set out compositional strategies for later use. So to for the colour exercises and laying out ink selection and coloured papers p. 41, 42-44 and 45, pinning the overlapping papers to the panel p. 155, temporarily fixing in place to see what it looks like p. 137, 138-139, holding the stencil against the panel p. 147, and the reference to and juxtaposing earlier works p. 103, 137, and in the journal p. 87.

Mulling-over—standing back, looking back over, a pondering consideration, implying spending some time in contemplation on a particular thing. To some extent, the photo documentation of journaling provides occasion for looking back over what has been done, for example, how a particular move affects what is happening in the work of p. 6 and 72. All the long shots across the studio of work in progress record mulling over. The double page spread images that punctuate the journal pages in *Volume One*, are in the literal sense a standing back from close interaction with the working environment p. 65, 66-67, and 70-71. The process of uploading camera images to make digital files, selection of images and subsequent printing of the most appropriate for inclusion into the journal is accompanied by considered reflection on both the act of documenting and also what is being documented.

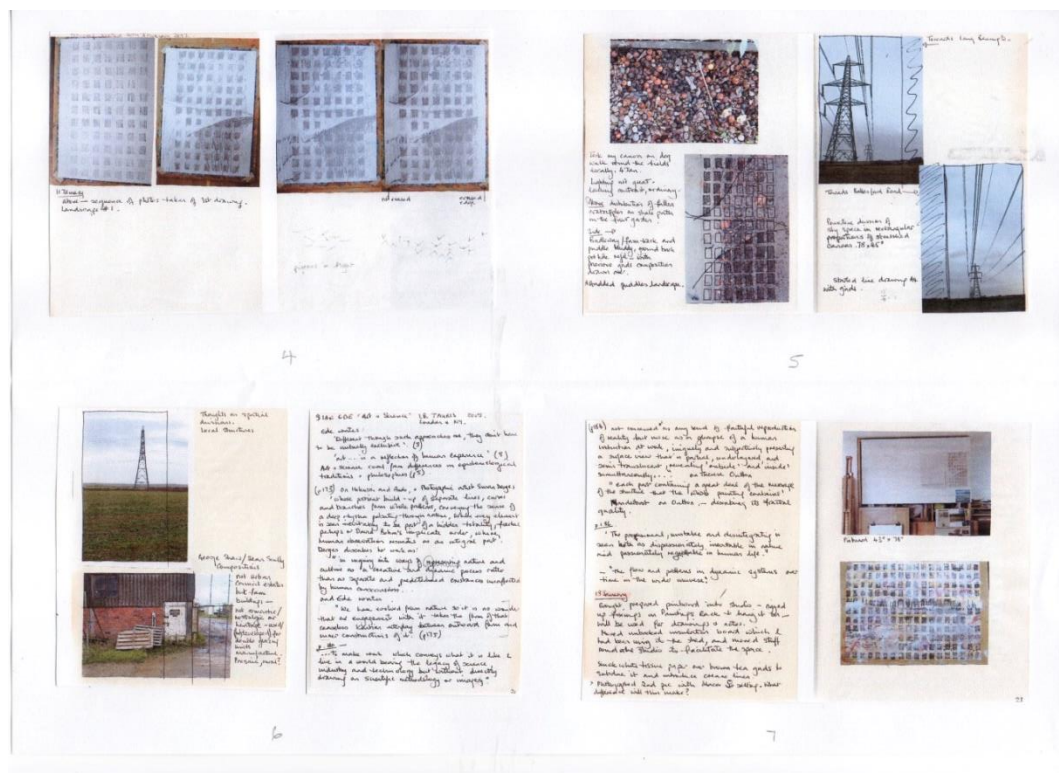


Fig. 61. Mulling over: editing page content for Volume One, 2016.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ Photograph, author's own, 2016.

Deciding –This may follow mulling over or may be the result of an immediate ‘gut’ response. It is the form of deliberation that is conclusive, one of resolving or settling on a course of action. Examples of this can be found on p. 29, 62, the action points at bottom of page p. 115, and the projection of linear arrangement onto six panels p. 108. All changes and inclusions on the canvas panels are the result of a myriad of local decision-making, p. 146-147. It is also arrived at by trial and error testing and modification of experimentation with the materials, as in the small squares of p. 160-161. All conclusive moves and additions to the canvas are the result of decision making.

Prioritising – In the sense of determining the order for dealing with (a series of items or tasks) according to their relative importance, prioritising is putting things in the order of importance; in this practice it is ordering the process. Implicit in the development of the panels is an ordered layering, setting out the background, or ground on which to construct the collage grids. This is based on experience of earlier collage grids process of stretching the canvas, priming with emulsion, then stretching papers, having determined what works best. The example here is of the alignment of coloured papers, squares and text p. 101, 120. Prioritising becomes tacit in practice, in a ‘feel for the game’, and is implied rather than stated.

Imagining – generally understood to mean forming a mental image or concept of, to think or compose, to conjecture. It is thought to mean judgment or opinion based on inconclusive or incomplete evidence, as in guesswork, or to assume or have a notion about something without adequate foundation; to arrive at by association provides a different logic for causal evidence. In collage grids practice, imagining is about bringing things together, such as walking and drawing, drawing and gravel texture p. 6-7, of music and panels, the latter understood as graphic notation of a music score p. 82-83. Also by extension as in ‘I imagine the smaller area extending beyond the limits/edges of the small canvas to spread across the larger area at the same time as imagining the larger composition – at least the visual feeling of the larger composition – and how they meet and dissolve into each other’ of p. 103. Imagining is evident in the juxtaposition of portrait format of small collographs with the six larger panels of p. 25, 26, and 40; the six rectangle format in Surrogate City and Metaphor preliminary studies p. 38 and 39; and the juxtaposition of images of cloud arrangement with the six panels. Imagining the same arrangement scaled up, 1: 92 study for collage grids, projecting the idea of six rectangles onto collaged texts, checking for cloud arrangement, 1: 115 premonitory imaginings, where

the term premonitory generally indicates an unwelcome intuition of a future, a foreboding or an early warning of a future event; forewarning³⁵⁵. In this context I use the term premonitory to describe something arrived at by intuition, an early undeveloped sense, a feeling for what might be, not one associated with a particular sense of warning, of being unwelcome or bringer of foreboding, just of something sensed in advance. Colour sketch titled *9 October Tuesday*, p. 41, and p. 179 colour study with collage grids, final state.

Imagining here is not the derisive term suggested by the terms incomplete, inconclusive, lacking adequacy. For art it is the very lack of closure, of fixedness, of work in progress and unfinished thinking that is generative and that permits emergent thinking.

Clarifying –to make more comprehensible, by separating out the impurities, is evident in restating the stenciled grid format p. 73, the relational diagrams p. 31, and the ‘Introduction’ slides of associations, discourses and strategies of collage and grids on p. 85. Clarifying is restricted when admitting the complicated to practice; characteristic of which is the refusal of an abridged or simplified form. Clarification understood as making pure, or free from ambiguity is not what collage grids does. Through collage, it sets up instability and double meaning, where grids act in terms of alignment rather than reductive emptying of content. In terms of the exegesis, Volume One does not clarify but articulates collage grids thinking.

Re-living –the journaling is, to a great extent, a layered deposit of re-lived experience, where each entry comprises a particular period of time, a whole day or part of a day. Photographs taken during the process of making are uploaded, archived, printed, cut up, arranged in sequence, then stuck in the journal and annotated. The annotations entail re-living the moments before and after the image was captured, seen in the arrows and numbered points, evident on p. 131, 133, 153-154, 160-161.

³⁵⁵ (online) <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/premonition> (accessed 3 August 2016).

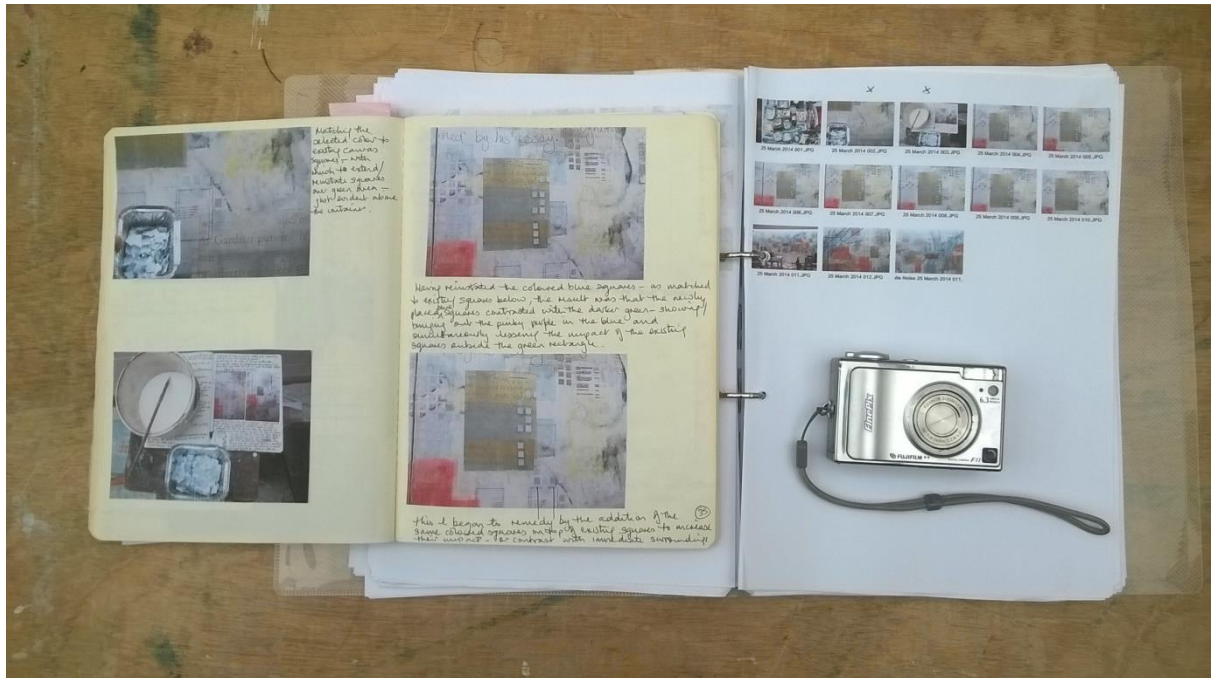


Fig. 62. *Re-living: Photo archive, journal and camera, 2016*. Reflection on journal as a collage grids process of juxtaposition, overlapping and alignment.³⁵⁶

To Archer's list, I add courses of action for collage and grids, of collecting, selecting, modifying, juxtaposing, overlapping, assembling and aligning, and of improvising, and play.

Collecting – To group, assemble, to gather material, to accumulate, to extract from a source, to get things from different places and bring them together, accumulated in a single location at the same time, as on p. 167. The typically similar in stamp collecting, or diverse, varied, assorted, sundry, disparate, eclectic, unrelated, or wide-ranging, collecting can be based on a specific project, or conversely, on a seemingly random sense of what catches one's attention at the time. A form of bricolage, collage collection draws on local, available things, materials at hand, that are fragmentary and partial; such as Picasso's material textures of wall paper and commercial objects, labels, tobacco wrappings and newspapers, Tatlin's scrap materials, Rodchenco's and Mayakovsky's used industrial materials. These disparate 'found' materials are brought together with art materials, a collection of canvas, paints, inks, brushes and glue. Distinct from that of the collector who aims for a complete set, this form of collecting is open ended, an unfinished project, of paying attention and noticing, one of possibility rather than purpose.

³⁵⁶ Photograph, author's own, 19 July 2016.

Items collected while out walking, from around the home, from reading, from galleries and museums, are put in boxes, p.134, pinned up in the studio, p. 59, or added to the piles of newspaper cuttings and other extracts p. 79-80. Sound, texture and colour from walks are included by way of association in drawing, marks and lines, p.166, prints, p.25, 26, 40, together with the scuffs and smudges of oilbar, p.30, 54, the colour of fruit, p. 47, coloured papers, p. 44, 47, 111, piles of lattice and boxes of squares p.158, and general paper recycling, p. 64. There is a rhythm to collecting, it is occasionally absent minded, not a compulsive 'must have' searching out specific items, but an act of accumulation through sight, touch and increasingly, sound.

Selecting – to carefully choose the best or most suitable, to pick or hand-pick, choose from among several, to single out in preference to, or to fix on, to extract, to cite, selecting is discriminating, and critical, it indicates decision – making. Selecting text for the poster, p. 11-12, also p. 32, 34, inks for colour exercises, p.43, 46, papers to cut for example, p.49, and for arrangement, p. 51.

Modifying – to make partial or minor changes to, adjust, adapt or amend, to revise or transform, alter and change. It includes editing and colouring, to cut or trim, to make minor changes to, p. 131. Examples include colouring, with inks, p. 41, 43, 46, with oilbar, p.98 and 170; and cutting, p. 20, 22, 100 and 120, cutting away the lattice and squares as well as trimming, and inking up p. 100, 111, 154, 176, 178.

Juxtaposing – place or deal with close together for contrasting effect, to put side by side things that are not similar, for comparison or contrast, abutting, touching, bordering, proximate, contiguous with, examples include, photographs of work in progress, p. 6 and journals, of texts on canvasses, p. 66-67, abutment of papers, p. 94, of colour in the exercises, and of tubes of ink, p. 44, of works of others, p. 55, 85, of exhibition ticket and journal documentation, p. 84, and of paintings in exhibition, p. 184 – 185.

Overlapping – a form of juxtaposition, to extend over so as to cover partly, layering. It is bringing together by crossing over boundaries, bridging. Examples include coloured papers, p.42, 155, pinned papers, p. 137, of modules and areas, p. 177, lattice and areas, coloured papers, exercises and notes, p. 43, lattice on composition in progress, p. 51, layering gold leaf, p. 135, of drawing over composed papers and lattice over drawing, p.53, text on top of grids, p. 90, preliminary studies and six panels, p. 104, all papers overlap in some form or other on the canvasses, p. 122-123, between reading and making, p. 125, of handwriting

over collage, p. 136. When colour or tonal value contrast, this results in a sensation of floating or hovering, p. 98. In the instance of colours being 'adjacent' or sharing a similar tonal value then they become more 'anchored' or 'embedded' in the visual surface, p.90. Where colours are the same, then the introduced element or grid apparently dissolves and disappears into the background and is evident only by its paper-thick addition to the surface. A combination of these strategies sets up a complicated reading of the surface, p. 100, an 'advance/recede' forward/ backwards dilemma, where the reading of the surface is one of spatial instability and indecision, adding to its 'double status'. A complete overlapping of two entities produces a form of projection, for example, the grid and gravel p. 7, the grid layout for poster, p11 evident in drawn lines, top right p. 12, projecting the grid over the six panels, p. 76-77, and the cloud form over the panels, p108, of the collage grids process and conference poster, p. 23. Page 159 is an example of both juxtaposition and overlapping, resulting in an interplay of material and idea through process. Juxtaposition and overlapping create non-linear associations, a form of non-linear logic.

Assembling – entails bringing together, an arrangement of the composite, and dissemination into the new field, a distribution. Implying something more than to collect, assembling involves engagement between the parts, a meeting and connecting, fitting components together. Assembling includes an element of manufacture or construction towards a whole. Reference to this on p. 127, reflections on assembling collage and grids, p. 133.

Aligning - linking and connecting, making associations between things. Constructed geometrically, it is closely associated with the operations of linear logic, which sets up fields of relationships, p. 6, mapping them through the coordinating features of orthogonally intersecting parallel lines, producing sets and arrays of rectangular modules; the cut of the lattice and the resulting square modules of collage grids, p. 18, 20, . Written words align on the page, as does text, working with alignment with collage requires a tolerance for slippage, p. 73, and offset, p. 95, and can accommodate a degree of fluctuation in reading, p. 101, 102. Links and connections can operate both ways, p. 131, between areas, modules and colours, p. 133, and can be made between close things in small jumps, as well as across distance. Aligning drawing marks and colour is a correlation of contingent physiological sensation with material associations.

Improvising – to produce or make (something) from whatever is available or at hand. It is ‘thinking on one’s feet’ and refers to the not planned. It is ‘very fast judgment, very fast action, and the right estimation of what one can do’³⁵⁷. It is working with established behaviours and strategies in the immediacy and movement of making, rather than being without any forethought of preparation. Improvising includes courses of action ‘post-cloud’ composition. In fact, courses of action that comprise collage strategies of composing are all executed by improvisation, a spontaneity and impromptu extemporizing, that is, without planning but not lacking prior preparation or practise. Collage is premised on improvisation, in all the strategies of collecting, selecting and modifying, and dissemination into the new field. It is about working with what is at hand. In this instance, texts from reading and ‘found’ papers provide source material, as well as photographs taken locally. It is about thinking with and ‘listening’ to the senses, touch and sound as well as sight. It is in the immediacy and movement of making that very fast deliberation takes place. It is deliberation based on a developed ‘feel for the game’, or ‘going with the flow’ with a sense of intuitive ‘ok-ness’ that is not as definite as that of ‘truth’ or ‘rightness’. It is the quiet thrill of ‘flying by the seat of one’s pants’, of thinking ‘through’ rather than ‘with’ materials examples of which are evident in p. 131-132, 147-149, 152-154, 160-161, 164.

Clearly evident from this analysis of reflexive deliberations of collage grids is that collage grids thinking is not linguistically based. The journals show that thinking happens with images and partial images; with colours, line, shape and pattern, sound and touch, light and dark, forward and back, across, up and down; with behaviours, processes and strategies rather than primarily with words. They show deliberation kept moving through courses of action, the movement and momentum is maintained by reflexive deliberation of internal conversation and reflexive action. Reflexive deliberation and reflexive action is a reciprocal arrangement, a back and forth relationship. It would seem that it is this reflexive arrangement that mutates (biological metaphor), or ‘short circuits’ (electronic metaphor, but not one that dwells on the faulty aspect, rather that it bypasses verbal thinking) into improvisation. Collage grids thinking happens through materials of coloured papers, with cut lattice, ground and found additions, in layering deposit by deposit each discrete area, each panel, and in bridging gaps between each in a rhythmic continuum of movement. With action leading thinking, thinking leading action; material leading idea, idea material, in

³⁵⁷ Yona Friedman, (2005) in *Merz World: Processing the Complicated Order* ed. by Adrian Notz and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, (Zurich: JRP Ringer Kunstverlag AG, 2007), p. 118.

mutual reciprocity, until the boundaries between one and other eventually dissolve in a simultaneous sequential of improvisation in practice.

Writing on the reflexivity of 'thinking-in-action', Schön and Bamberger³⁵⁸ cite Ben Shahn, who writes of this movement of reflexivity in relation to the activity of painting,

So one must say that painting is both creative and responsive. It is an intimately communicative affair between the painter and his painting, a conversation back and forth, the painting telling the painter even as it receives its shape and form.³⁵⁹

Collagegrids thinking is such a conversation. Not premised on looking in, or introspection, but on listening, and simultaneity, premised on receiving and responding, thinking and doing, at the same time, p. 160-161. Shahn's back and forth conversation between painting and painter implies agency on the part of the painting. This project identifies this exchange as an internal conversation, between past and present, and present and future, between what has been done and what there is yet to do, mediated through reflexive deliberation of the immediate present. In this sense, primary handling of non-linguistic and tacit knowledge, of the specifics of shape, form and colour, of pictorial volume and surface plane, alignments and correlations, juxtaposition and overlap interact with the verbal, mediated in a zone of intersection, by osmotic exchange and transfer of collage interrelation and grids alignment, in reflexive deliberation.

We cannot pass over non-linguistic knowledge as if it did not exist, and this is partly because there is an actual interchange between it and discursive knowledge.³⁶⁰

Themes of grids and collage, structure and agency, discursive and non-discursive forms of knowledge coalesce in this discussion. It is at this crux, the coalescing space of osmotic exchange and transfer, the interplay of grids and collage, that the 'through' of my collagegrids practice is located and investigates.

The interplay of art practice

While Archer's courses of action describe typologies, they do not account for the relations between them.³⁶¹ The notion of interplay describes a form or mode of relations between things. Defined as 'the ways in which two or more things affect each other when

³⁵⁸ Jeanne Bamberger and Donald Schön, "Learning as Reflective Conversation with Materials." In *Research and Reflexivity*, by ed. F. Steier, 186-209. London: Sage Publications, 1991.

³⁵⁹ Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

³⁶⁰ Archer 2000, p.161.

³⁶¹ Articulated by the term interplay in Primary Research Finding 7. Commentary, p. 54.

they happen or exist together',³⁶² or 'reciprocal action and reaction; interaction, to act or react on each other; interact',³⁶³ notions of play and interplay are important in the collage grids context.

The notion of play is not out of place in this research. Inherited from art school, where students are encouraged to engage in experimentation for its own sake, the idea that 'play' is central to imparting important theoretical discoveries was developed by Bauhaus teachers including Itten, Klee, and Albers, who had more than casual ties with Froebel's kindergarten teaching. Many Bauhaus and subsequent art school projects 'appear to have been devised as more adult extensions and developments of Froebelian occupations'.³⁶⁴ Bauhaus teaching includes exercises of tactile and sound perception, theatrical movement, compositional balance, volumes, statics and dynamics, and qualities of light,³⁶⁵ where 'teachers and pupils together would construct the world'.³⁶⁶ Although presented as a set of controlled exercises, Itten noted that 'the basic goal of my efforts to teach art had always been the development of the creative personality'.³⁶⁷ Sensory exploration was encouraged across different materials and methods and affinities constructed between them aimed at the production of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art.³⁶⁸ Introduced into post war Britain, Froebelian inspired Bauhaus art school training formed the template for contemporary art education,³⁶⁹ where exploration of different approaches and construction methods occupy a central place in art and design foundation teaching.³⁷⁰

For art, the term interplay implies more than interaction, it indicates a particular fluid mode or movement of exchange that is generative. A common understanding of play is of

³⁶² (online) <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interplay> (accessed 3 August 2016)

³⁶³ (online) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/interplay> (accessed 3 August 2016)

³⁶⁴ Fern Lerner, "Foundations for Design Education: Continuing the Bauhaus Vorkurs Vision." *Studies in Art Education, A Journal of Issues and Research*, 46.3 (2005), 211-226, in (Wilson, 1969), p. 104.

³⁶⁵ *Bauhaus 1919-1928*. edited by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius and Ise Gropius (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938), *50 years Bauhaus German Exhibition* edited by Herbert Bayer, Ludwig Grote, Dieter Honisch and Hans Maria Wingler (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1968),

³⁶⁶ Recent exhibition at the Institute of Figuring, USA, (online) <http://theiff.org/oexhibits/kindy02.html> (accessed 3 August 2016)

³⁶⁷ Johannes Itten, *Design and Form: The Basic Course at the Bauhaus*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), p. 104.

³⁶⁸ Lerner, p. 212.

³⁶⁹ Bauhaus Catalogue, Coldstream Report, (Rebekka Kill, "Imperialist Legacy or Academic Strategy? Resistance to writing in undergraduate Art Education" *Writing-PAD*, 2006. www.jiscmail.ac.uk/WPAD-disc-Kill.doc (accessed 25 July 2014), also <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/arts/alumni-and-associates/the-history-of-arts-education-in-brighton/post-war-curriculum-and-assessment-coldstream,-summerson-art-history-and-complementary-studies> (accessed 19 July 2016)

³⁷⁰ David Thistlewood, (online) <http://www.artsedarchive.org.uk/collitem.aspx?id=22581&cid=85>, (accessed 31 August 2016)

engagement in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.³⁷¹ The play promoted by Froebel was of the most serious kind, fundamental to spiritual and personal growth and to theoretical understanding. The difficulty here is the tension set up in the idea of something somewhat frivolous engendering something quite serious. It is this notion of constructive play that is central in this study.

To Archers list of ‘because’ courses of action, I also add playing; the play of creative making. A grown-up version of child’s-play through which adults can gain enjoyment and therapy; and just like the younger version of self, it can also be a source of learning and attainment of knowledge. It does not set out to result in something firm, fixed or final, but rather aims to be open, fluid and provisional. More active than the ponderous ‘mulling over’, it is active imagining, a form of slow motion improvisation that suspends or postpones closure. The process of playing with ideas through material is not determined by planning or prioritising. It does not aim at clarifying and does not necessarily re-live, rehearse or mull over. Its decision making results in something more provisional, less permanent, and its imagining more practical/grounded than blue skies thinking. Bricolage like, it can be eclectic, and it draws on what is at hand, within reach.



Fig. 63. *Collage pack, blue/green*, Tate Gallery.³⁷²

For collage grids, the process of setting up relations between entities follows Bauhaus principles of experimentation and constructive play. More guarded in discussing spiritual aspects of world-making, key theoretical discoveries of collage grids include principles of building collage from simple to complex forms, not crystalline, but with the grid form of Froebel’s Gifts. The intention for collage grids is not to demonstrate the underlying Unity of all things but rather to explore how disunity might do more than roughly coexist, but actually be productive through the interplay of its very difference. What brings them

³⁷¹ (online) <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/play> (accessed 19 July 2016)

³⁷² Photograph, author’s own, 2016.

together, just as what keeps them apart, is determined through the decision-making of human agency.³⁷³

It is the juxtaposition of difference, where two things or entities happen or exist together, that tension is set up between them. In collage grids, tension is created by difference of colour, of tone or scale, by position or placement, by overlapping or abutment. In many cases, alignment, or the constructing of affinity, is created, if for no other reason, by things happening or existing together, at the same time. The tension that juxtaposition sets up is experienced (read or viewed) as a to and fro movement, an interplay of critical oscillation, of conversation. Unlike the swing of a pendulum, travel is not necessarily linear, nor does it return by the same path. Rather, it is a matter of attending to one thing and then another, and back; setting up, seeking out or feeling for some form of resonance of potential pattern, some texture of distinction or contrast between entities. The return move brings with it a residue of that attentive experience, which added to that of the first engagement, on which it builds, constructs a reassessment of the new, now layered, situation. The term 'flexion' refers to a bending, in this instance, of attention; reflection is a bending back on itself, a return. The repeating process of re-flexing back and forth, each movement accumulating and responding to the accreted deposit of the last, describes the relations of reflexivity. In addition to linear travel across the canvas, a non-linear thinking is presented by the layering of papers in the same space, where movement advances and recedes in the same space. Here, thinking occurs simultaneously, where several things happen at once. Brought together temporally, their interplay is a coinciding stillness of immediacy. In this sense the interplay of conversation is reflexive play of linear time and surface space.

The fluctuating osmotic exchange of human reflexive play of material with idea; of collage with grids, of structure with agency, of kinaesthetic and synesthetic, of non-discursive and discursive, of colour with line, time with space, is the *through* of thinking through collage grids.

Asserting the primacy of practice acknowledges an expanded view of human being, and this is demonstrated in practice and in theory. This research theorises practice in terms of practice, from a practitioner perspective and asserts the importance of recognising concrete material practice in engaging the natural person as well as the social being.

³⁷³ Kwame Anthony Appiah speaks eloquently to this in 'Mistaken Identities', his BBC Reith lectures, 2016, online <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2sM4D6LTTVIFZhbMpmfYmx6/kwame-anthony-appiah>

These discussions present an integrated view of art and thought with which to understand the complexity of human sense-making. They acknowledge the role of practice in constructing human being as much as the human being constructs practice.³⁷⁴

Drawing on contextual study, these discussions elucidate the Commentary findings. They throw light on the thinking – making exchange that accommodates the planned, ordered and structured with that which is chance, chaotic and contingent; an interplay of the linear and non-linear. Discussions present theory as embedded in and modified by practice, and acknowledge the necessity of human agency, the indispensable *through* of decision – making; a correlation of linguistic and non-linguistic practice. Finally, by cohering two different oriented perspectives, the discussions generate a greater understanding of that articulated by the Commentary, namely, the complicated thinking-making exchange, the interplay of material and idea, the generative, emergent and unfinished mode of constructive composition that is collage grids.

³⁷⁴ This thesis therefore places collage grids somewhere between the Critical Realism of Archer and Bhaskar and the Constructive Realism of Borgdorff and Schwab.

Discussion 4: modelling cognition

Diagrams inhabit a liminal space between representation and prescription, words and images, ideas and things...employed across disciplines as a thinking tool, the diagram hence holds the promise of transforming abstract issues into graspable images and translating the unseen into intelligible and actionable form³⁷⁵

This doctoral project is an investigation into artistic cognition. Through practice-led research it articulates and elucidates the collage grids mode of artistic thinking, of thinking through collage grids. However, how can this collage grids thesis be presented to a wider audience? What can it offer the study of human cognition?

Modelling cognition and learning has a long tradition. This discussion attempts to model collage grids thinking in order to explore its potential and applicability beyond the discipline of fine art. The role of model as a form of representation or mode of clarification appears at odds with collage grids complex and complicated practice, characteristic of which is the refusal of an abridged or simplified form. However, models can also provide a means of opening conversation across disciplinary fields, as a thinking tool.³⁷⁶ This section introduces collage grids research findings to models of artistic cognition and cognitive linguistics. Drawing on the collage grids mode of thinking presented in *Volume One*, elucidated by the Commentary and Discussion, this discussion tests these theories of cognition. Note: Discussion 4 is intended to be read alongside the other sections and not as a summary argument.

The study of human thinking is generally regarded as the preserve of the field of cognitive psychology, including study of perception, attention, language processing, numerical cognition, action and motor control, spatial cognition, learning, memory, reasoning, and

³⁷⁵ 'Diagrammatic: Beyond Inscription?' conference summary 2-3 December 2016, Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge (online) <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/26782>

³⁷⁶ The exhibition of the Conference Poster (Volume One, p. 23) at Sam Sorer Gallery, October 2016, alongside collage grids and the preliminary studies, triggered discussion with gallery visitor Dr. Kevin Byron, physicist and trainer in research skills, University of Leicester and Queen Mary, London, regarding cognition and creativity.

decision making.³⁷⁷ Cognitive psychologists build cognitive models of the information processing that goes on inside peoples' minds.³⁷⁸ Models of cognition found in the field of educational psychology include Bruner's Spiral curriculum,³⁷⁹ Arthur Efland's Spiral and Lattice,³⁸⁰ and more recently, Graeme Sullivan's 'Artistic Cognition and Creativity'.³⁸¹

Efland identifies changes in learning theory from its earlier developmental focus to a cognitive basis and spells out implications for visual arts teaching. The spiral and lattice, he points out, are geometric forms, metaphoric representations of three interrelated factors, (a) the way knowledge is organised in an individual's knowledge base, (b) the way domains of knowledge are organised in and of themselves, and (c) the way content is arranged for purposes of instruction.³⁸²

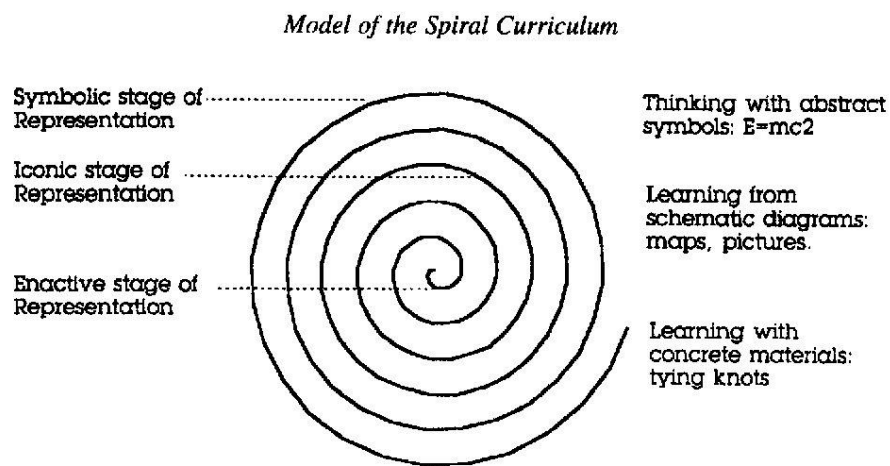


Fig. 64. Model of the Spiral Curriculum, 1995.³⁸³

The spiral model depicts a linear path for knowledge and knowledge acquisition, a hierarchical model, in which early learning provides the foundation for later learning.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁷ Journal of Cognitive Psychology, Aims and Scope, (online) <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=pecp21> (accessed 17 September 2016).

³⁷⁸ McLeod, S. A. (2015). Cognitive Psychology. Retrieved from www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive.html (accessed 17 September 2016).

³⁷⁹ Psychologist Jerome Bruner "The Process of Education" (1960), Constructivism: Learning by Doing A Spiral Approach to Curriculum (online) <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/gilbert/musedtechwkshp/learn.html> (accessed 12 September 2016)

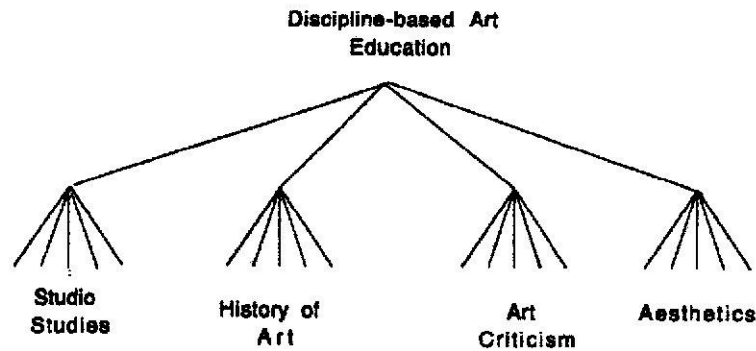
³⁸⁰ Arthur D. Efland, The Spiral and the Lattice: Changes in Cognitive Learning Theory with Implications for Art Education, *Studies in Art Education*, 36:3, pp.134-153, 1995

³⁸¹ Sullivan, G. "Artistic Cognition and Creativity." In *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. by Biggs and Karlsson, 99-119. Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2010.

³⁸² Efland, 1995, p. 135.

³⁸³ Ibid. Note the base position of learning with concrete materials in this bird's eye view of the rising cone of achievement.

Discipline-based Knowledge Shown as a Tree Without Overlapping Elements



Discipline-based Knowledge Shown as a Semi-Lattice with Partially Overlapping Elements

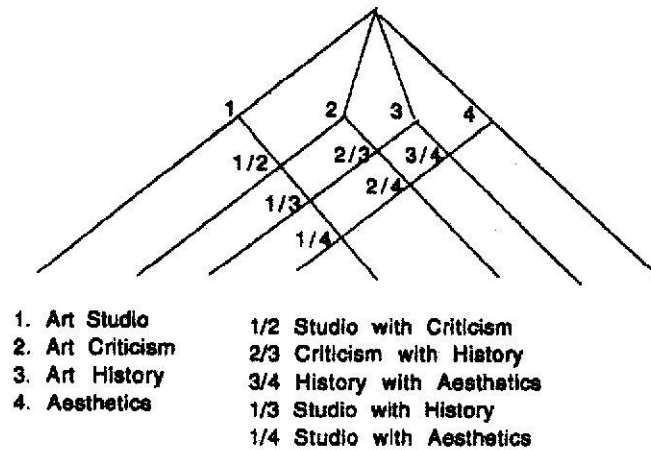


Fig. 65. The lattice model of knowledge, 1995.³⁸⁵

Both of Efland's above diagrams model knowledge on a linear structure. The top diagram utilising the branching of divisions of tree metaphor, which divides up knowledge into separate paths. The lower diagram begins to show how knowledge results from a mode of bringing together, where selected realigned paths cross, overlapping to form a set of intersecting parallel lines of a grid. The lattice provides 'multiple occasions for the sub-disciplines to intersect, creating more routes of intellectual travel than the tree'.³⁸⁶ In this model, the intersections are conceived as opportunities to cross over or transfer from one path of knowledge-seeking to another facilitating a more complex, but linear, mode of explorative travel.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 134.

³⁸⁵ Efland 1995, p. 151.

³⁸⁶ Efland, 1995, p. 150.

Drawing on theories of cognition, Graeme Sullivan aligns a theory of artistic cognition within a context of creativity.³⁸⁷ Rather than exploring the aspect of creativity that is ‘habit of mind’, Sullivan asserts creativity that is socio-culturally constructed, which, in his thinking,

‘is positioned as contextual factor that mediates between the creative insights that emerge from visual cognitive processing and the critical processes that occur when these insights are interpreted within discipline frameworks and other socio-cultural parameters’.³⁸⁸

Sullivan equates/elides the metaphor of sight with artistic cognition; he writes, ‘to see is to think’. His position rests on a notion of artistic cognition ‘that is partially shaped by the cultural contexts that inform ‘what’ it is that we see, and partially governed by the biological processes that connect ‘how’ we see’, and in doing so he appears to bypass the personal. Sullivan mobilises a theory of transcognition in which he identifies three kinds of artistic practices, ‘thinking in a medium’, ‘thinking in a language’, and ‘thinking in context’, with a key role ascribed to visualisation, which in Fig. 3 are situated in abutting domains.

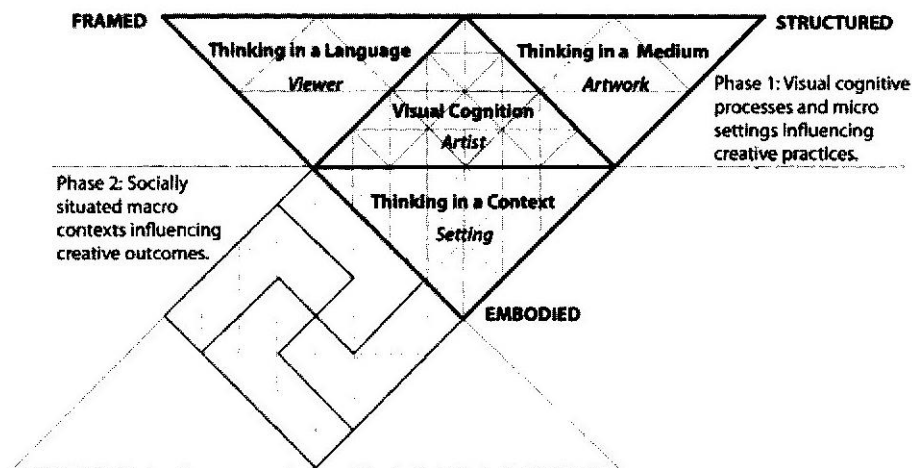


Fig. 66. Theoretical structure of visual cognition and creativity, 2010.³⁸⁹

For Sullivan, visual cognition is a biological as well as cultural construct, ‘where mindful practices are structured, framed and embodied’. These are cognitive practices which take

³⁸⁷ Sullivan, p. 114.

³⁸⁸ Ibid p. 107.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 115.

place within, across and around the artists, artwork, viewer and setting. Sullivan's model does not point to or articulate processes of structuring, framing or embodying, or how they take place 'across', 'between' or 'around', the three kinds of artistic practices that he identifies. Sullivan describes his processes as being 'in' (the three constituent domains of language, medium and context), rather than transitory, as in 'through'.

In contrast to the distinctive forms of human knowing Sullivan proposes for artistic cognition, collage grids identifies thinking processes of art central to all practices of human knowing, practices of bringing together, selecting, modifying, and assembling in a new field, aligning with personal concerns and projects; that engages with what is inherited, tacit and established in relation to the contingent immediacy of the found lived situation, which embraces language, medium and context. It is not the forms of knowing that are distinctive, but the peculiar sensitivities arising from their interplay when thinking through art.

Occularcentric, the role of visualisation is key to Sullivan's theory. Collage grids is not about visual cognition, nor for that matter, visual language.³⁹⁰ Visual cognition is not the same as artistic cognition neither is thinking in images the same as thinking through art. The notion of artistic cognition is much more inclusive than the visual permits. For collage grids, artistic cognition actively embraces metaphors for knowledge drawn from all the senses not just from vision. Drawn from all the senses, collage grids artistic cognition asserts the immediacy and simultaneity of hearing, touch, (also, smell and taste), and sidesteps the distancing requirement of representation and mirroring of sight. In this view, artistic research and its articulation through theory construction is about sharing what it is that artists make when they make their artwork, which includes the concrete and material. Art practice has therapeutic value exactly because it offers the possibility to bring together all that is human, in a tangible way that is meaningful for each individual.

Where Sullivan ties the thinking process to language, medium, or context, Metaphor studies of cognitive linguistics locate evidence of the thinking process in language and provide further models of cognitive structuring and conceptual structures, in which the 'within', 'across' and 'between' of domains are explored further.

³⁹⁰ Kathryn Moore, "Visual thinking: hidden truth or hidden agenda?" *Journal of Visual Art Practice* Vol 4.2&3, 2005: 177 - 195.

Mapping cognition

Themes of grids and collage, structure and agency, discursive and non-discursive, inherited and immediate coalesce in the discussion thinking it through. It is at this crux, the space of osmotic exchange and transfer, of interplay, that the 'through' of my collagegrids practice is insistent. Described as the ways in which two or more things affect one other when they are brought together, the interplay of collage and grids in collagegrids practice is articulated in *Volume One*. Commentary and contextual discussion serve to elucidate the constructive composition of collagegrids and situate it's framework in the field of fine art and theory of practice. The 'thinking it through' section extends that contextualising field, to include an account of metaphor construction and conceptual blending and discusses the implications of materially anchored artwork for the linguistically based theoretical field.

Collage juxtapositions of words and phrases in Marinetti's 'Words in Freedom', Schwitters' Merz poetry and David Bowie's song lyrics alert me to the potential for word collage in poetry. However, to have meaning word collage requires something of the structuring quality of grid's alignment to link and connect bits and pieces of fractured meaning in order to make sense of them, to construct meaning. Metaphor has something of word collages and juxtapositions together with grids alignment in the way they are constructed and make sense.

Generative and New Metaphor

Commonly understood to refer to a literary device, metaphor is a poetic figure of speech, whose meaning is not intended to be consistent with literal meaning. Far from being a rhetorical flourish, metaphor is basic and constitutive for all the thinking that we do, where conventional ways of talking presuppose metaphors we are seldom aware of.³⁹¹

Functioning as a means of bringing two things into relationship, metaphor is about understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.³⁹²

No longer seen as located in words but in human thought processes, metaphor is understood as 'metaphorical concept', and draws on source domains of human experience and neural connections to our embodied sensations, actions and emotions.³⁹³ It is metaphor that creates the possibility of 'abstract' reasoning and thought, including

³⁹¹ A version of this section was first published in JVAP.

³⁹² George Lakoff and Mark Johnson *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 5.

³⁹³ This is also Primary Research Finding 4. Commentary, p. 52.

philosophical speculation, 'the mind is embodied and metaphor gives it the power that it has.'³⁹⁴

The development of new metaphor is a process whereby familiar concepts are brought together to enable new meaning.³⁹⁵ New metaphors create reality rather than simply give us a way of conceptualising a pre-existing reality.³⁹⁶ New reality is possible because metaphor is not a matter of objective reality, residing in words. Lakoff and Johnson point out that objective reality, a view of reality wholly external to and independent of how human beings understand the world, leaves out human aspects of reality, in particular the real perceptions, conceptualisations, motivations and actions that go to make up most of what we experience.³⁹⁷ They argue that the changes brought to our conceptual system by new metaphor changes what is real for us, affecting how we think of the world and how we act on those perceptions.

In metaphor, meaning is not fixed and is arrived at by association,³⁹⁸ where, 'what we experience...is a kind of reverberation down through the network of entailments that awakens and connects our memories of...experiences and serves as a possible guide to future ones'.³⁹⁹ In new metaphor, these 'semiotic concatenations',⁴⁰⁰ chains of connections, associations and links have the power to create new reality.⁴⁰¹ However, as Paul Ricoeur argues, metaphor does not exist in itself but through the act of interpretation, pinpointing this as the event of resolving the tension within the metaphor that creates new meaning.

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Jeanne Bamberger and Donald Schön write of generative metaphor as an instance of a generative process,⁴⁰³ the process of making a metaphor, they write of 'the moment (or more often, the momentary articulation of an on-going process) in which a person comes to see in a new way'. Their concern for generative metaphor evolves into a more focused

³⁹⁴ Gilles Fauconnier, "Cognitive Linguistics." *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*, 2006, (online) <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/0470018860.s00214/full> (accessed 15 February 2012)

³⁹⁵ This is Primary Research Finding 2. Commentary p. 49.

³⁹⁶ Lakoff and Johnson 2003, p. 145.

³⁹⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p. 146.

³⁹⁸ This is Primary Research Finding 6. Commentary, p. 53.

³⁹⁹ Lakoff and Johnson 2003, p. 140.

⁴⁰⁰ Benardi in Ambrozic and Vettese 2013

⁴⁰¹ Lakoff and Johnson 2003, p. 145.

⁴⁰² Paul Ricoeur, 1976.

⁴⁰³ This is also Primary Research Finding 6. Commentary, p. 53.

attention to the making process itself, ‘... and indeed, to the making of things, as this, too, involves coming to see in new ways’.⁴⁰⁴

From literary device to generative process, the operation of metaphor is understood to be fundamentally constructive, where meaning is arrived at through the construction of links and connections.

Constructing metaphor

Not located in words but in human thought processes, metaphor draws on source domains of human experience and neural connections to our embodied sensations, actions and emotions. Building on the theory of metaphor established by Lakoff and Johnson, Gilles Fauconnier describes the metaphor operation in terms of projection and mapping, and, occurring exclusively in the mental domain, as ‘powerful conceptual mappings at the core of human thought’.⁴⁰⁵ Basing their model on the image of overhead projector, Lakoff and Johnson saw the target domain as the first slide and the metaphorical projection as the process of laying a second slide on top, whereby the structure of the second source domain transferred, or crossed, to that of the first, the target, which ‘allowed us to conceptualise the idea that metaphors add extra entities and relations to the target domain’.⁴⁰⁶

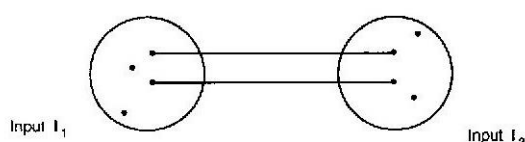


Fig. 67. *Cross Domain Mapping*.⁴⁰⁷

Central to cross-domain mapping are notions of source and target domain, where the source domain is used to structure the target domain by means of a metaphorical mapping. In this model, the structures and inferences of the source domain are projected onto the target domain in a systematic way that defines a rich conceptualisation not previously present in the target domain.⁴⁰⁸ Fauconnier’s mappings are premised on transfer of

⁴⁰⁴ Bamberger and Schön 1991, p. 208.

⁴⁰⁵ Fauconnier, 2006.

⁴⁰⁶ In Gilles Fauconnier *Mappings in Thought and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 150.

⁴⁰⁷ Fauconnier, 1997, p. 150.

⁴⁰⁸ Fauconnier, 2006, p. 6.

partial⁴⁰⁹ elements of the source which are used to structure the target domain, ‘mappings tend to be partial, but the projection metaphor doesn’t allow for this.’⁴¹⁰

In ‘Mappings of Thought and Language’ Fauconnier writes that mappings between domains ‘are at the heart of the unique human cognitive faculty of producing, transferring and processing meaning’, where mapping ‘is a correspondence between two sets that assigns to each element in the first a counterpart in the second.’⁴¹¹ Extending the model of cross domain mapping, Fauconnier proposes generic space, a space that contains what the two inputs have in common. It maps onto each of the domains or inputs, and reflects some common, usually more abstract structure and organisation shared by inputs and defines the core cross-space mapping between them, see Fig. 2.

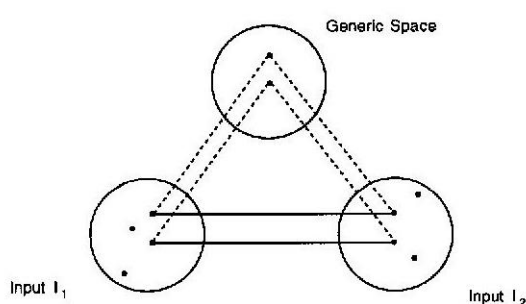


Fig. 68. *Generic Space*.

The model in Fig. 3 identifies the blend, where inputs I₁ and I₂ are partially projected onto a fourth space, see Fig. 3. Not all elements and relations from the inputs are projected into the blend.

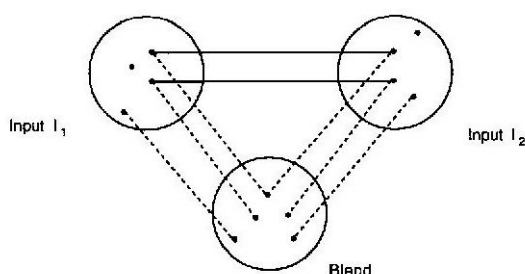


Fig. 69. *The Blend*.

⁴⁰⁹ This is Research Finding 3, Commentary, p. 50.

⁴¹⁰ Fauconnier, 2006.

⁴¹¹ Fauconnier, 1997, p. 1.

In this model the new identified space is distinct from the input domains, and has emergent structure not provided by the inputs. Schematically shown in Fig. 4, the square indicates the emergent structure in the blend.⁴¹²

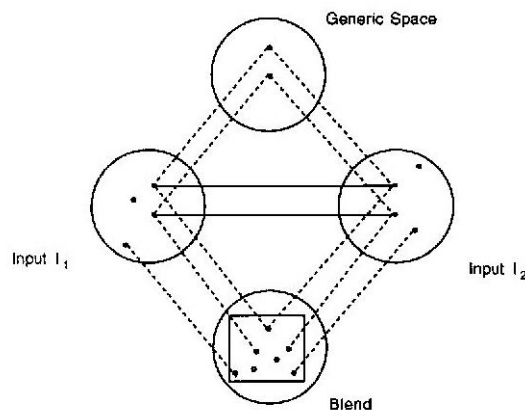


Fig. 70. *The Emergent Structure.*

Fauconnier writes ‘once the mapping between the two domains is in place, with a common vocabulary applying to mapped counterparts, it is possible to blend the two notions into a third integrated notion that incorporates the first two and goes beyond them.’⁴¹³ He writes that blending is a cognitive operation that gives rise to conceptual integration, where the mappings in both directions facilitates the blending integration process, which, ‘if successful’, the partial structures from the two separate domains ‘are no longer fundamentally distinguished.’⁴¹⁴

The emergent structure that arises in the blend is not copied there directly from any input but is generated in three ways: through composition of projections from the inputs, through completion based in independently recruited frames and scenarios, and through elaboration (or running the blend).⁴¹⁵

The first, in composition, blending can compose elements from the input spaces to provide relations that do not exist in the separate inputs.⁴¹⁶ Secondly, completion takes in to account the extent of background knowledge and structure that we bring into a blend unconsciously. Blends recruit great ranges of background meaning including pattern

⁴¹² This is Primary Research Finding 5. Commentary, p. 52.

⁴¹³ Fauconnier, 1997, p. 22.

⁴¹⁴ Fauconnier, 1997, p. 23.

⁴¹⁵ Giles Fauconnier Mark and Turner *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and The Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 46-47.

⁴¹⁶ This is primary Research Finding 1. Commentary, p. 47.

completion. This the most basic kind of recruitment, where we see some parts of a familiar frame of meaning, and much more of the frame is recruited silently but effectively into the blend. An illustration is provided in Figure 71 where we see two line segments separated by a rectangle, through pattern completion; we infer that there is a straight line running 'behind' the rectangle.

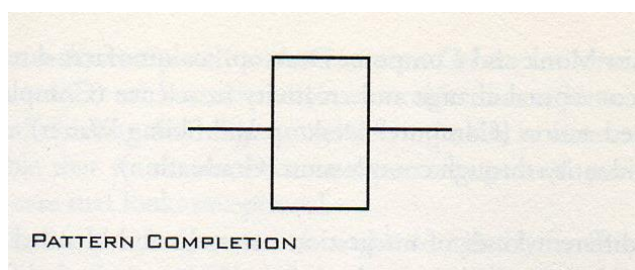


Fig. 71. *Pattern Completion*.⁴¹⁷

A minimal composition in the blend is often automatically interpreted as a richer pattern.⁴¹⁸ Lastly, they write, we elaborate blends by treating them as simulations and running them imaginatively according to the principles that have been established for the blend. Some of the principles for running the blend will have been brought to the blend by completion. Part of the power of blending is that there are always many different possible lines of elaboration, and elaboration can go on indefinitely. The creative possibilities of blending stem from the open-ended nature of completion and elaboration. They recruit and develop new structure for the blend in ways that are principled but effectively unlimited. For Fauconnier and Turner, composition, completion and elaboration lead to emergent structure in the blend; the blend contains structure that is not copied from the inputs. The square in Figure 4 represents emergent structure.

In 'The Way We Think' Fauconnier and Turner assert that,

Conceptual integration is at the heart of imagination. It connects input spaces; it projects selectively to a blended space, and develops emergent structure through composition, completion and elaboration in the blend.

And comment that this fundamental cognitive operation has not previously been studied.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ Fauconnier, 2002. The rectangle in this diagram also produces overlap, providing a bridge across the dividing edge of difference. See Commentary, p. 36.

⁴¹⁸ Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 38.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. p. 89.

They write,

We do not establish mental spaces, connections between them, and blended spaces for no reason. We do this because it gives us ... new understanding and new meaning.⁴²⁰

Like collage, metaphor functions by bringing pre-existing 'found' domains together, and like grids, these mathematically determined grid structured fields of domains are linked and connected by coordinate based mapping and linear construction of alignment. The collage of metaphor is evident in the juxtaposition of the pre-existing found, where meaning is arrived at by association. The projection image implies the overlapping of fields and areas, where selective parts and structures are transferred from one field to another. In this collage grids research, Fauconnier's generic space is occupied by the activating agent together with *denkraum*, the thought space of composition; the blend by the field of assembly of the partial that have been selected from their source domains and which constructs new space. The emergent space refers to the changing accumulation of new relations set up between elements introduced to the new field, a space that does not represent or mirror but constructs new reality.

The grids of metaphor refer to the structure and structuring of frames, domains and fields, and to the links and connections set up and alignments constructed between the domains. It refers to the intersection based coordinates mapped and aligned in the new field and to the imposition of projection of partial structures inherited from the already structured field. Processes of completion and elaboration entail principled structuring and patterning and frames of meaning. Interplay is described in terms of connecting lines, denoting mappings, which travel in both ways to facilitate the integration process. For Fauconnier and Turner, the processes of completion, elaboration and composition are mental operations which construct the emergent structure of the conceptual blend.

Mental Space

Mental Spaces Theory is an extension to the framework of conceptual blending theory and is a cognitive theory of meaning construction. Fauconnier writes of mental spaces as small conceptual packets which are constructed as we think and talk, for the purposes of understanding and action; 'They are very partial assemblies containing elements, and structured by frames and cognitive models. They are interconnected and can

⁴²⁰ Fauconnier and Turner 2002, p. 92.

be modified as thought and discourse unfold'.⁴²¹ Mapping onto each other in intricate ways, mental spaces proliferate in the unfolding of discourse, and 'provide abstract mental structure for shifting, anchoring, viewpoint, and focus, allowing us to direct our attention at any time onto very partial and simple structures, while maintaining an elaborate web of connections' ... 'mappings between mental spaces are part of this general organisation of thought'.⁴²²

This description of mental space of an assembly of the very partial, which is structured using grid format frames and connections in a process of modification and change, is couched in terms of collage and grids. In terms of very partial and simple structures of small lattice forms and the runs of arrays of modules, this is the language of collage grids, which is also an elaborate organised abstract structure for shifting, anchoring, viewpoint and focus. It is the interplay of collage and grids, such as that presented by collage grids, which is closest to Fauconnier's description of mental space. In terms of collage grids, metaphor can be understood as constructive practice, a sense making operation that engages both cognitive and concrete, inherited and the immediate and contingent, linear and non-linear modes, discursive and non-discursive, objective and subjective, reality. However, while offering a compelling account of conceptual structuring and meaning making, indicating methods of construction, Fauconnier's highly abstract model is also reductive, in that leaves out human aspects of the transaction, and reference to engagement in the world.

Material Anchors for Conceptual Blends

The literature on conceptual blending would suggest that this is a cognitive process operating in mental space alone. For Hutchins, what is at stake is the boundary of the conceptual blending process. He argues that far from being a completely cerebral activity, 'the conceptual blending process include(s) the perceptual processes and therefore include(s) bodily interaction with the physical world',⁴²³ pointing out that the association of conceptual structure with material structure is an 'ancient human cognitive phenomenon',⁴²⁴ and finally, conceptual structure is linked with the material, and it is their interaction that gives rise to emergent structure in both. He writes 'phenomenologically, the object that emerges from the blending process... is experienced in the perception of the

⁴²¹ Fauconnier 2006, p. 7.

⁴²² Fauconnier, 2006, p. 8, 9. What Fauconnier describes here correlates closely with the construction of the mental space by collage grids. See Primary Research Findings, Commentary pp. 47-54.

⁴²³ This is Primary Research Finding 7. Commentary, p. 54.

⁴²⁴ Hutchins, p. 1560.

material structure...'⁴²⁵ Schiff observes of Bradford, 'the materials may be forming him as much as he is forming them.'⁴²⁶ This exchange, noted earlier by Darboven, of 'the transfer of content-laden form into lived experience' is the reciprocity of being 'conveyed by the conveyed experience.'⁴²⁷ In Hutchins words, 'all aspects of the conceptual model are embodied in the structure of external media and the cognitive operations performed on the model are implemented as physical manipulation of material structure.'⁴²⁸ While this description of process acknowledges the exchange between conceptual and material, it suggests the primacy of conceptual activity over material action. Hutchins' rectifies this in contextual discussion on the development of the mathematical and logical symbol system, where he posits the question of what came first, 'the purely internal models or the materially anchored models?' Crucially, what Hutchins achieves is to show that the same sort of processes operate where one of the domains or input spaces contains material structure, which not only contributes to the internal cognitive process but also provides stability to the conceptual structure. He concludes,

This unification is important because it provides an antidote to the false dichotomy between the study of conceptual models and the study of material resources for thinking.⁴²⁹

This project is positioned at just this point of unification, but goes further to show not only how material structure stabilises conceptual structure but how both material structure and mental space are constructed simultaneously through practice.

Insightfully, Hutchins writes, 'Unfortunately, much of cognitive science is based on the mistaken view that this relatively recent cultural invention is the fundamental architecture of cognition,'⁴³⁰ and asserts that the very idea of rationality is a cultural construct that owes its existence to the ability to create a certain class of materially anchored conceptual blends.⁴³¹ This argument echoes Williamson, that the process of thinking and reasoning has been defined by geometry and the processes of reductive abstraction. However, metaphor does not entertain any such claims to veracity. Indeed, quite the opposite. As literary trope and rhetorical device, it has been considered flamboyant, unnecessary and exaggerated. Following Mark Johnson 'If you acknowledge conceptual metaphor, then you have to give

⁴²⁵ Ibid. p. 1559.

⁴²⁶ Schiff 2012, p. 132.

⁴²⁷ Hanne Darboven in Cantz, 1994, p. 40.

⁴²⁸ Hutchins 1995, p. 1574.

⁴²⁹ Ibid. p. 1576.

⁴³⁰ Ibid. p. 1575.

⁴³¹ Ibid. p. 1575.

up literalism. If you give up literalism, you must abandon objectivist metaphysics and epistemology, you must abandon the classical correspondence theory of truth. Eventually, you will have to rethink even your most basic conception of what cognition consists in',⁴³². This presents shades of Brockelman, where, in *The Frame and the Mirror; On Collage and The Postmodern*, collage is pitted against philosophy, raising problems of representation, questions of truth, and, ultimately, meaning. In this sense, metaphor is like collage; it does not reproduce the real but constructs an object, in a conscious act of construction, one that intervenes in the world, not to reflect but to change.⁴³³

Writing on conceptual blending and mental space, Evans, Bergen and Zinken, observe, 'Together these two theories attempt to provide an account of the often hidden conceptual aspects of human meaning construction', where language 'provides unspecified prompts for the construction of meaning which takes place at the conceptual level'.⁴³⁴ Following Hutchins, by replacing language with material anchor, we can say that material anchors provide unspecified prompts for the construction of meaning, which takes place at the conceptual level. And further, by replacing study of linguistics with the study of material processes of art practice, we can say that material processes of art can provide unspecified prompts for the construction of meaning, which takes place at the conceptual and material level.

Writing in *WIREs Cognitive Science*, Vyvan Evans recognises that while cognitive linguistics approach provides an integrated view of language and thought with which to model the complexity of human imagination, one that takes into account embodiment, experience and usage while being firmly committed to the study of cognitive structures and processes,⁴³⁵ language is just one modality.⁴³⁶ He writes

Cognitive linguistics worldview treats language as but one of the mechanisms whereby humans construct their perceptual, cognitive, and sociocultural reality...cognitive linguistics fully recognise that there are myriad ways in which humans experience their environment, including sense – perceptory experience,

⁴³² Mark Johnson, 'Philosophy's Debt to Metaphor' in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* edited by Raymond W. Gibbs, 39-52 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴³³ Ulmer 1983, p. 86.

⁴³⁴ Evans 2007, p. 18.

⁴³⁵ Ibid. p. 30.

⁴³⁶ Vyvan Evans, "Cognitive Linguistics." *WIREs CogSci* doi:10.1002/wcs.1163, 3:2, 2012, 129-144

proprioception, and subjective experiences including affect, the visceral sense, and diverse cognitive evaluations and states.⁴³⁷

And finally that

Clearly, communicative meaning relies on language as well as non-linguistic knowledge. As of yet, however, the relative contribution, and the way the two systems interface, is still not yet fully resolved.⁴³⁸

This discussion conceptualises metaphor as a construction which utilises processes of collage and grids. However, cognitive linguistics maintains this process is one that operates in the conceptual domain alone. Admitting material processing, not just images or visualisation, to cognitive structuring engages the physical natural human and with it non-linguistic discursive practices. This study articulates the relative contribution of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge to the construction of communicative meaning in the documentary of thinking it through collage grids, contributing the concrete and material to what hitherto has been a dominantly linguistic theory. Furthermore, the creative relation between domains of concrete material and conceptual mental space is described in terms of the cognitive processes of improvisation and interplay, included in the through of reflexive deliberation. This study offers a theorising of practice that not only admits, but accords human being powers and properties of dynamic engagement and activation, providing the activating 'because' rather than 'cause', guided by their own concerns and projects, in the reflexive deliberations of practice.

Thinking it through collage grids

Sullivan's model presents thinking happening in three domains, the language domain of the viewer, the medium, of the artefact and the context, of the setting, with visual cognition of the artist in the middle. There are no processes of structuring offered just broad indication of within, across and around the domains. In Fauconnier's model thinking happens across domains, with a partial mapping from input domains integrated into the emergent space of the blend. He describes processes of composition, elaboration and completion, where mappings across domains produce, transfer and process meaning. Fauconnier's model deals with cognition solely in the conceptual domain. Hutchins introduces the notion of material anchor for conceptual blends, where conceptual structure is linked with material structure, for example from an image or picture, but not in terms of

⁴³⁷ Evans, 2012, p. 138.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. p. 139.

concrete process. What is unresolved is how material resources interact with conceptual structure, and where human being as activator of processes and practice, fits into the model.

Critically, both Sullivan's model of artistic cognition and creativity and Fauconnier's models of conceptual integration are at base limited by an insufficient image of the human being. While broadly acknowledging the embodied mind, the role or impact of being human does not input into these mechanistic models. Through practice, we can go beyond these restrictions and provide a model that primarily aligns thinking with human being. Guided by the primary research findings of practice,⁴³⁹ modifications can be made to Fauconnier's model of conceptual integration.

Replacing generic space with human being, what is private and personal is introduced to the model together with the person's concerns and projects. Like generic space before, this maps onto each input, engaging with, rather than reflecting, processes and practice shared by the inputs and activating rather than defining, the core cross-domain mapping between them. This model is activated through the 'because' of courses of action, through multi-path, simultaneous and synesthetic modes of reflexive deliberation. The engaged decision-making of deliberation, the 'because' courses of action that makes associations, that generates links and connections, inflects back, to modify and change the self, which, not universally given, but is contingently made. With each action we are both subject and object of our emergent concerns and projects, and are altered by the process.

The input domains in this model are occupied by collage and grids, fields of knowledge which include tacit practices and found material, where each domain has a concrete as well as conceptual dimension. The lines indicate dynamic movement of reflexive courses of action, of deliberation, improvisation and play, where each domain is activated by human agency. Without practice, we become deaf, and lose touch with ourselves and the world.

All aspects of the conceptual structure correlate with the structure of the external media, and the cognitive operations⁴⁴⁰ implemented in the physical manipulation of material structure are also implemented in the cognitive structuring of mental space. It is in this way that concrete material serves to anchor the emergence of the cognitive and personal in the tangible material world. The emergence of abstract mental space can be tracked with the assembly of concrete material in the documentation of practice presented in Volume One.

⁴³⁹ Commentary, pp. 47-54

⁴⁴⁰ Cognitive operations here refer to reflexive deliberations of practice

The space occupied by Fauconnier's blend is replaced by a heterogeneous rather than homogenous space. As in Fig. 6 The Blend, inputs (by way of actions) are selected, transferred and assembled into a fourth space, in which partial and fragmentary inputs keep evidence of their initial contexts, and retain their alterity in the emergent space. The heterogeneous emergent space, composed through the interplay of collage and grids, has additional input that is correlated directly from the human domain into the emergent space. Significantly, as this interplay is reflexive, there is emergent structure in the domain of Human Being too. (Not shown in this diagram.)

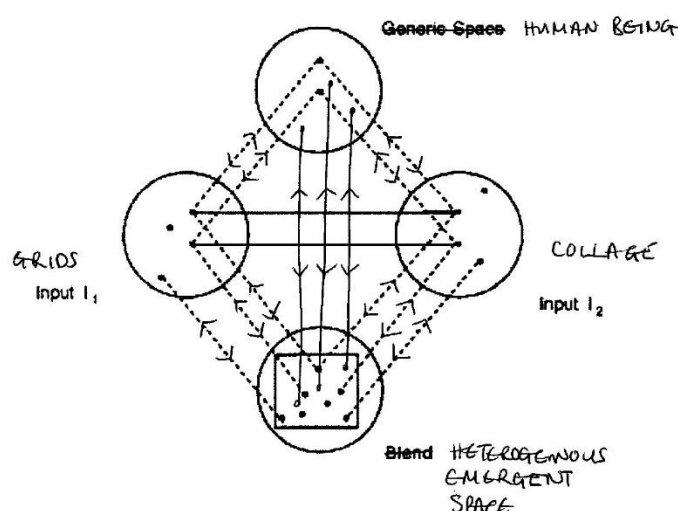


Fig. 72. *Collagegrids emergent structure*, 2016.⁴⁴¹

Collagegrids presents a more complex account than that provided by these models, discussing interplay and emergence in terms of behaviours, strategies and actions, reflexive deliberation and decision making, grounded in practice. Efland's linear pathways of knowledge-seeking become indications of aligning of reflexive deliberations. Traces of what Fauconnier and Turner identify as composition, completion and elaboration can also be identified in the collagegrids process. However, their notion of emergence arising from composition, completion and elaboration is further complicated by introduction of concerns and issues of the personal and private, and of practice, which do not reside solely in the realm of conceptual or theoretical, and do more than simply provide circumstantial detail to the process. Each reflexive deliberation is informed by the personal, practical and theoretical such that the domains overlap, and touch at many points and places simultaneously. Fauconnier's four domains are brought together in a single overlapping

⁴⁴¹ Diagram, author's own, 17 Sept 2016.

space. This model shows the juxtaposition of domains as they overlap, and where, by changing viewpoint by shifting the model through 90° shows the domains 'short circuited', their differences bridged, in a fluctuating space of foreground and background where alignments are structured simultaneously between domains, in a movement that advances and recedes; and draws the audience into the next layer of space.

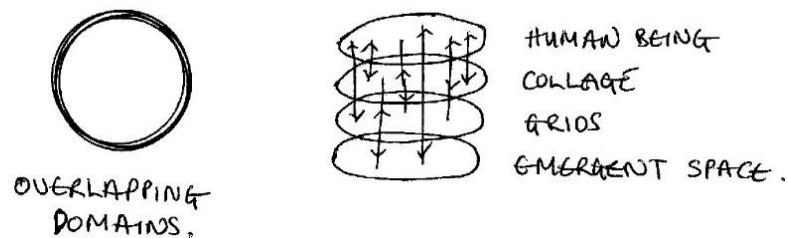


Fig. 73. *The overlap and alignment of practice*, 2016.⁴⁴²

Returning to the configuration of Fig. 9, the model below recognises the open nature of the fields that without outline are therefore not delineated, but are frayed at the edges.

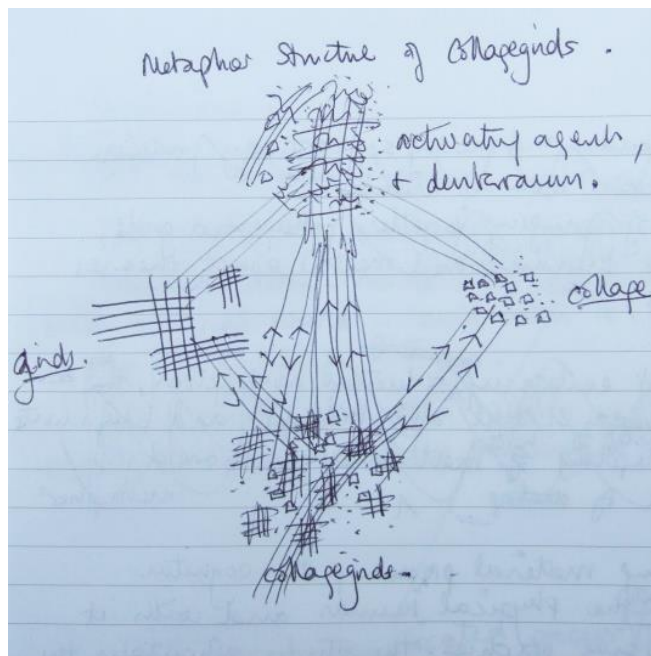


Fig. 74. *Mapping collagegrids*, 2016.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² Diagram, author's own, 17 Sept 2016.

⁴⁴³ Sketch, author's own, 5 Sept 2016. In constructing the model of collagegrids cognition, what becomes clear is just how massively reductive the model is when compared to the articulation presented by *Volume One* and *Commentary*.

The lines between domains show the links and connections, constructed through courses of action, where domains are not outlined, or circumscribed, and are introduced into the emergent collage grids space in fragments, piece by piece. Turning the conceptual model of Fig. 11 through 90°, once again draws the audience into an extended space, resulting in the materially anchored conceptual structure and mental space presented by collage grids. This material anchor, philosophical object and epistemic thing articulates the overlap of fragmented domains and heterogeneous composition of collage grids.



Fig. 75. *Collagegrids*, 2014.⁴⁴⁴

Having made such a shift, the composition takes on depth, and constructs space similar to that described by Perloff on Malevich and Riley on Mondrian. The viewer inhabits the role of human being in the natural world, moving from passive observer of diagrams to active engagement and participator in all senses, from representation to artwork.

In this place, thinking is contingent, composite and inclusive, and aligned with the personal. It is non-linear. Partial and fragmentary, it is open to synesthetic interplay of non-verbal, pre-verbal and premonitory. Primarily associative and generative, new composition emerges from the interplay of materials with ideas through a reflexive and cumulative decision making process, human deliberation.⁴⁴⁵

In collage grids formulation, without grids alignment, collage is accidental, irrational and inexplicably random;⁴⁴⁶ without collage, the grid projects interests of a powerful, universalised, over theorised and entrenched hegemony.⁴⁴⁷ Through the interplay

⁴⁴⁴ Photograph, Electric Egg.

⁴⁴⁵ Primary Research Findings, Commentary p. 55.

⁴⁴⁶ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. (Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁴⁴⁷ Krauss 1985, Taylor 2010.

constituting collage grids, each domain becomes tempered by the other. From this practice-led perspective, collage is seen to be aligned with the concerns and projects of an author, and grids structuring shown to be contingently made, determined by the use to which it is put.

This discussion attempts to address issues regarding exposition of the collage grids thesis in order to explore its potential beyond the discipline of fine art. It considers and modifies existing models of cognition, crucially adding material activity to the interplay of cognitive processing, and places human being and agency at the crux of operations, the activator rather than recipient of this interplay and exchange.

It identifies overlap, which it adds to the juxtaposition of domains in modelling cognition, a further dimension in bringing domains together. This short circuiting of the contributing domains articulates the complexity of simultaneous multiple inputs to cognitive processing, when considered through practice.

The project challenges inherited structures and modes of structuring knowledge premised on the primacy of geometrically determined logic and linguistically shaped theory. It challenges the solipsism of much contemporary art theory, and asserts that understanding these modes of materially anchored cognitive composition, of thinking through art, have value beyond the project and concerns of Fine Art.

Conclusion

This research is a contribution to knowledge in the following ways,

1. Through the documentation of PhD iteration of collage grids, this project articulates a logic that is associative and accumulative, and demonstrates the complicated, irreducibility of art practice. It describes a cognitive model that brings together epistemologies of knowing-how with knowing-that, in a process based and connective understanding of being human, by pressing the question 'but how does that work?'
2. This project brings together two well theorised fields that haven't been studied together before in such a direct manner. Through practice, it brings new evidence to bear on an old issue of collage and grids. While some investigation exists; Michael White writes on Kurt Schwitters and Piet Mondrian, but not on collage and grids together, also Hannah Higgins does not refer to collage in her book on grids, although she points to its processes. Richard Schiff speaks of collage and grids together in the work of Mark Bradford, but does not discuss their relationship. This project adds to this body of work showing grids to be constructed and collage, aligned to the personal not free floating chance. Not only does it bring collage and grids together, but also investigates how they come together in practice, and articulates its implications for theory.
3. It adds to Archer's taxonomy of modes of reflective deliberation, the doing of thinking, of improvising, collecting, selecting, modifying, assembling, aligning, and play. It brings together the *through* of Macleod and Holdridge's *Thinking through Art* with that of Archer's mediating deliberations of human agency.
4. The project extends the notion of *interplay* to better articulate understanding of artistic thinking, and correlates this with the *through* of practice; of personal and private reflexive deliberation. Moving from linear model to non-linear construction

of open and simultaneous interface of collage, changes how we think about the movement of thought which allows for increased complexity.

5. Drawing on practice, the project provides a new synthesis, which brings together Archer's Human Agency and Fauconnier's model of Conceptual Integration, adding what is natural and private to the space of deliberation.
6. Based on studio evidence and understanding of grids and collage, the project tests Fauconnier's thesis through practice, in a way that has not been done before.
7. The collage grids cognitive model offers a basis for dialogue with Cognitive Science. Thinking processes identified in fine art practice can be understood as a general basis of cognition not as a specialist branch of thought. The constructive composition of ideas and materials generated through their interplay is not specific to art. What makes fine art distinctive are the peculiar sensitivities to process that are refined through practice.

This project is guided by two primary commitments, 1) to take seriously the cognitive content of artwork, 2) to be determinedly practice-led. It articulates and elucidates the mode of constructive composition of collage grids and situates its conceptual framework in the wider field, where theory is seen as both integral to and the outcome of practice, by asking at every juncture 'but how does that work?'

Collage grids demonstrates that meaning does not break down but continues to function when the individual crosses traditional boundaries between worlds, it pays attention to the way in which mediation functions, how new space is generated and how new worlds are constructed.

The intention for collage grids is not to demonstrate an underlying unity of all things but to explore how disunity might do more than roughly coexist, be generative and productive through the interplay of its very difference.

Entrenched in conventional metaphors, of representation and revelation, of theoretical priority and premise, of linear reasoning and logic, language is inherently conservative. In order to retain integrity I have had to reject or modify certain words and phrases from inherited academic language, and continually rethink the most basic conception of what

cognition comprises, avoiding references that would misconstrue, mislead or mispresent. As a result I have tried to avoid unnecessary theoretically laden, dense language.

Collagegrids understands knowing as practice, and knowledge, its outcome. As theory resides in practice, so practice must reside – that is, have residence and live- in theory if we are to arrive at a fuller understanding of just how contingently knowledge is constituted and maintained. And so, equipped with what this writing has imparted, we now return, artist and audience, to the artwork, where the final understanding/meaning is articulated, to actively and imaginatively construct a new, different world.

We have taken science for realist painting, imagining that it made an exact copy of the world. The sciences do something else entirely – paintings too, for that matter. Through successive stages they link us to an aligned, transformed, constructed world.

Latour ⁴⁴⁸

I have come to use the word ‘composition’...It is my solution to the modern/postmodern divide. Composition may become a plausible alternative to modernisation. What can no longer be modernised, what has been postmodernised to bits and pieces, can still be composed.

Latour ⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays in the Reality of Science Studies*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁴⁴⁹ Latour, "Some Experiments in Art and Politics." *E-Flux Journal* 23. March 1, 2011. Online <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/some-experiments-in-art-and-politics>

Appendix: Conversations

To be human is to exist in the tension *between* solitude and society.

Vincent M. Colapietro⁴⁵⁰

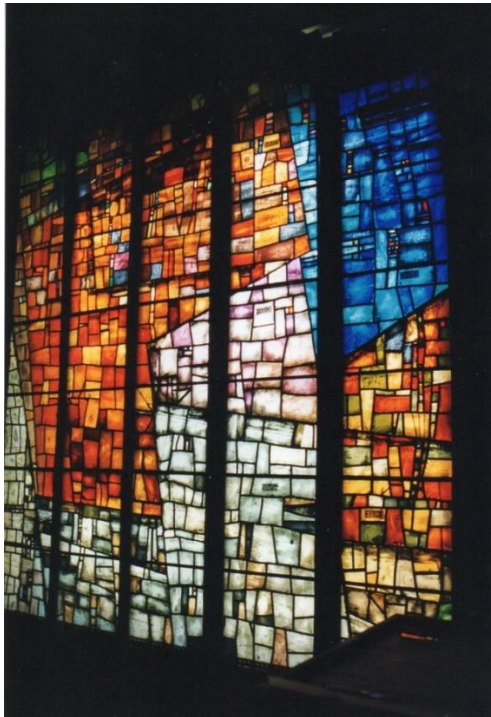
Sharing knowledge is inextricably linked with conversation. For many artists that knowledge is primarily generated in 'conversation' with materials. That conversation is extended to conversations with the work of others, in galleries and museums. Sharing knowledge in art also comes with visiting workshops and studios and in conversation with artists and thinkers. The following paragraphs and photographs expand on some of the conversations I have had with influential artists and thinkers.

With Antony Hollaway

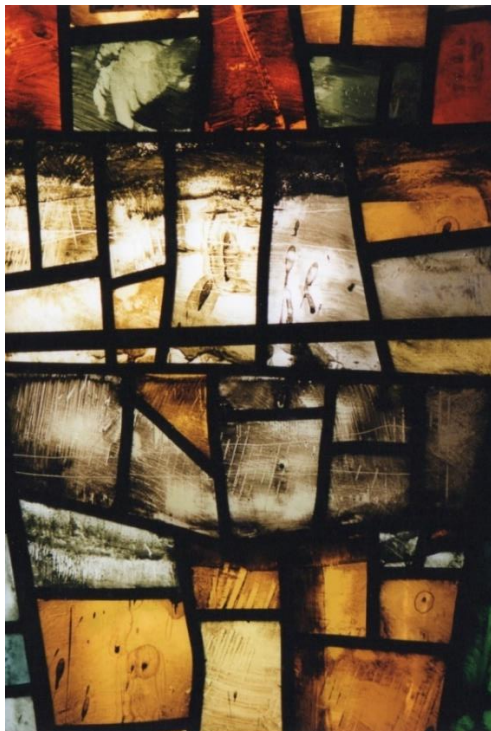
Design Consultant to the London County Council and Stained Glass Designer, Antony Hollaway also held the post of Head of 3D Design at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham. Visiting Hollaway's workshop on many occasions our discussion revolved around issues of projected and reflected colour in glass and painting, the constraints and enablements of grid formats, the mullions and tie bars which structurally support the lattice weight of leadwork, and the collage of selected and trimmed coloured glass, the use of decorated pieces retrieved from earlier windows, and the interaction of their colour, modified by stain and paint. We discussed Chevreul's colour theory of 1855 and the medieval windows of the Church of the Notre Dame de Paris, the Matisse's windows for the Chapel of the Rosaire, Vence, and the heraldic windows by Fernand Leger at the Church of The Sacré-Coeur, Audincourt, France. While a student of Keith New at the RCA, Hollaway had worked on the nave windows at Coventry Cathedral. In 1995, he completed five stained and painted glass windows for the west end of Manchester Cathedral and we discussed possibilities of working with traditional means and methods while addressing contemporary concerns. Like Schwitters, Tony painting alongside his architectural work which he exhibited at De Montfort University, Leicester, 1999 and for a while I shared a studio with him.

⁴⁵⁰ Vincent M. Colapietro, *Piece's Approach to the Self: A Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity*, State University of New York Press, 1989, in Archer 2003, p.vi.

In 1999, Hollaway was awarded the degree of Doctor of Arts by the University of De Montfort, Leicester. This was in recognition of his life's work and contribution to Art and Design Activity, and is presented in the thesis *Art in Public: Materials, Research and Development through Art and Design Action*. The thesis is lodged at the National Arts Education Archive.



Work in progress, Revelation Window for Manchester Cathedral. Photograph, author's own.



Detail, Revelation Window, in the workshop, Photograph author's own.

With Bruce Archer

On the occasion of Hollaway's doctoral graduation, I had the opportunity to discuss research by practice with Bruce Archer, Head of Research at the Royal College of Art, 1961-1988. At the time there were few examples of this mode of study for reference. Unpublished conversation, 21 July 1999. In a letter to Hollaway, he writes,

'You call the award of the Honorary Doctorate "a blow for freedom". I think of it more as a significant victory in the fight for the recognition of (appropriate levels of) art and design activity as substantial contributions to knowledge, worthy of academic recognition as much as anything that science, letters and the performing arts can offer.'

Unpublished letter from Professor Bruce Archer, CBE, to Antony Hollaway, 20 May 1999.

The evolution of the collage grids doctoral project parallels the subsequent developments in practice-based/ practice-led/ artistic research.

With Bridget Riley

I met artist Bridget Riley several times, one of which was the occasion at Tate Gallery, after her talk accompanying the exhibition *Mondrian: Nature to Abstraction*. Among other matters raised by the exhibition, we talked about how colours put on a canvas occupy different planes in space and how grids provide structure with which to connect and relate them. Unpublished conversation, 22 October 1997.

On a further occasion, of her lecture to Lincolnshire Artists Society, we had the opportunity to discuss her recent exhibition *Bridget Riley: New Paintings and Gouaches*, 7 June – 28 July 2006, Karsten Schubert Gallery, which I had visited. We discussed colour juxtaposition, and qualities of movement resulting from their interaction, and bending surface and space with colour. Unpublished conversation, 16th November 2006.



Image online <http://www.timothytailor.com/exhibitions/bridget-riley-new-paintings-and-gouaches/>

With Peter Moss

Principal of Lincoln School of Art and Design, artist, teacher and arts consultant, Peter Moss works primarily with decorative surfaces of ceramics. A joint exhibition of 2001 provided one of many opportunities to discuss art, making, exhibiting and teaching, 'If you want a voice, you need to get involved'. Many of our conversations revolve around drawing, specific qualities of different materials, their juxtaposition and the resulting movement, both across the surface and that inherent in the instabilities of surface/depth relations.



Peter Moss, *Rain through windows*, 2007, White earthenware clay, black glaze with white on-glaze enamel, Photograph, author's own.



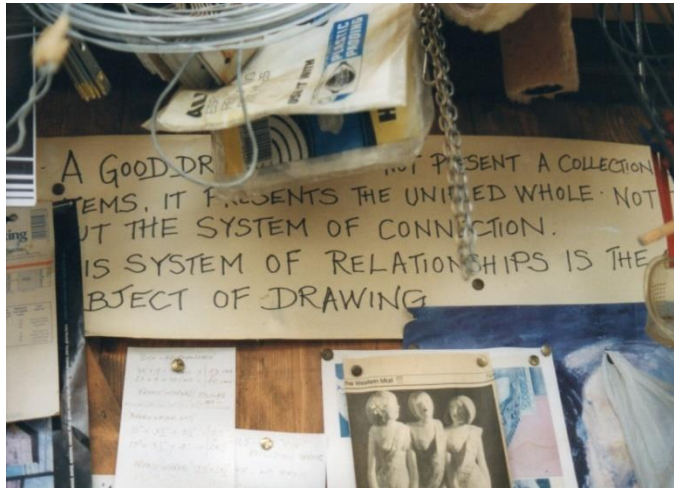
Peter Moss, White stoneware vase with black inlaid drawn surface. Photograph author's own.



Peter Moss, Four large dishes, Image online
<http://www.petermoss.me.uk/gallery/decorative/decorative2.htm>

With John Horwill

I visited and kept up correspondence with John Horwill, RCA, my university tutor and artist. We discussed the business of painting and drawing, on developing working processes and the teaching which drew on the 1950/60's 'Basic Design' movement in British art and design education. After his death in 1997, I was invited to curate a retrospective exhibition *John Horwill RCA: A Retrospective 1927-1997* with accompanying catalogue and talk. The retrospective included aspects of Horwill's teaching and his teaching materials.



Horwill's studio wall, 'this system of relationships is the subject of drawing' Photograph, author's own.

With Harry M. Fairhurst

Through Hollaway, I met Manchester architect Harry Fairhurst. Our subsequent conversations revolved around grids, structures and materials. With his connections to Ambleside, we also discussed Kurt Schwitters, collage and colour. Unpublished letters, author's own collection.



Faraday Building, UMIST, 1967 concrete construction, by H.M. Fairhurst, 1967. Image online <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2781558>

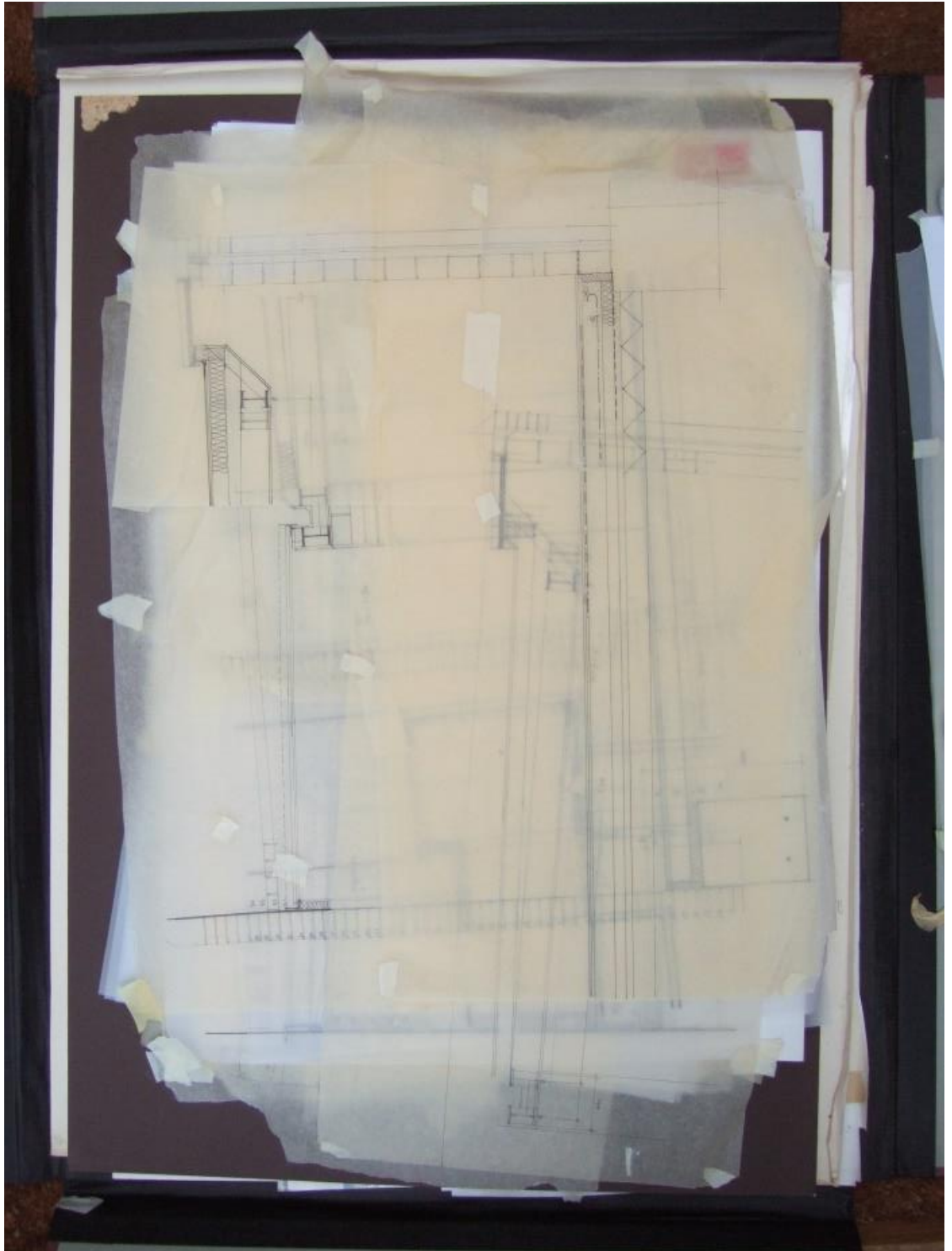
With Christopher Eisner

Senior Architect with Norman Foster, Chris Eisner was a meticulous architect with whom I discussed art, architecture and design, and in particular, a shared interest in the discipline of drawing by hand. In the digital age of slick images and seductive marketing, there is a danger of overlooking the degree to which manual drawing practices engender as well as display ideas and understanding. Of the Carré D'Arte, Nîmes, Commerzbank headquarters in Frankfurt, and Montevetro Building, Battersea, we discussed grids and structure, and, with reference to his interest in *Cornerstone*, publication of the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, we discussed approaches to working with both the inherited and what is contemporary, retaining respect for and integrity of both.

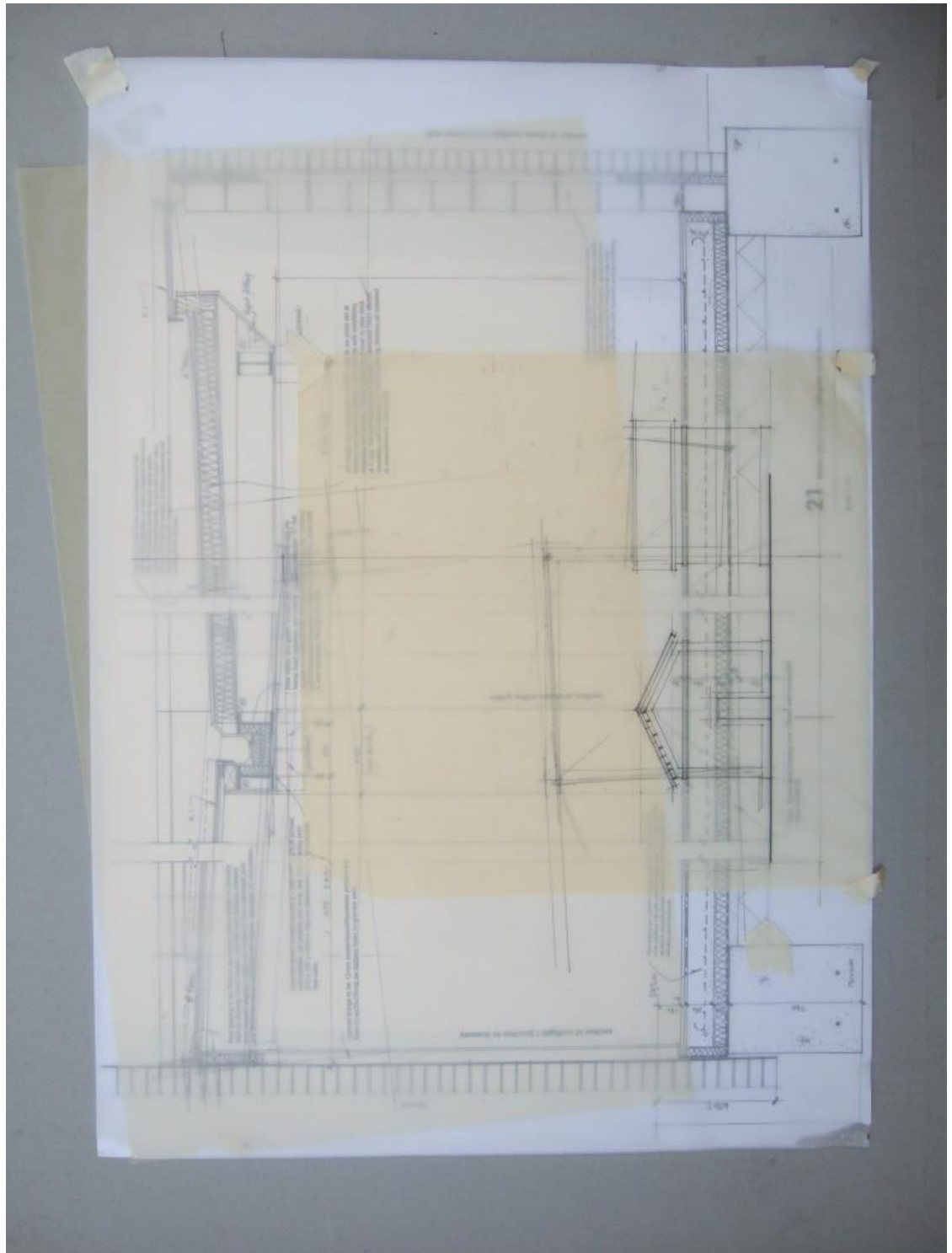


Carré d'Art - Médiathèque of Nîmes, Nîmes, France 1984 – 1993

Image online <http://www.fosterandpartners.com/projects/carr%C3%A9-dart/>



Christopher Eisner, preparatory planning drawings for the studio. Photograph author's own.



Christopher Eisner, preparatory planning drawings for the studio. Photograph author's own.

Overlaid sheets of partial designs together construct the drawing. Working in this manner design detail can be isolated, reviewed and modified then introduced and aligned resulting in the amended composition. Collage over-lay and paper transparency facilitate modification and change during the production of hand drawn designs.

With composer Bernard Hughes.

commissioned by the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival 2003
for the BBC Singers

duration: 8-9 minutes

scoring:
8 sopranos
6 altos
6 tenors
6 basses

The choir must be placed in the particular arrangement given (see diagram),
and in the course of the piece be able to sit and stand.

One-and-a-Half Truths is a musical collage of eighty short aphorisms and epigrams. By turns wise, subversive, opaque, pithy, paradoxical, often funny – occasionally just silly – they are taken from a spectrum of cultures, times and contexts, from the ancient Chinese Tao Te Ching to contemporary British writers. Starting with an item of medical advice by Hippocrates (author of the original aphorisms) the piece embraces Blake, Gandhi, Kafka and Spike Milligan (and many others) on its way to a final serene chorale, a setting of the opening verses of the great Buddhist text, *The Dhammapadam*:

Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think.
Suffering follows an evil thought like the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draw it.

Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think.
Joy follows a pure thought like a shadow that never leaves.

Bernard Hughes 114 Earfield Road London SW18 3DR bernard.hughes@btinternet.com

One-and-a-Half Truths

Performance Instructions

Choir layout

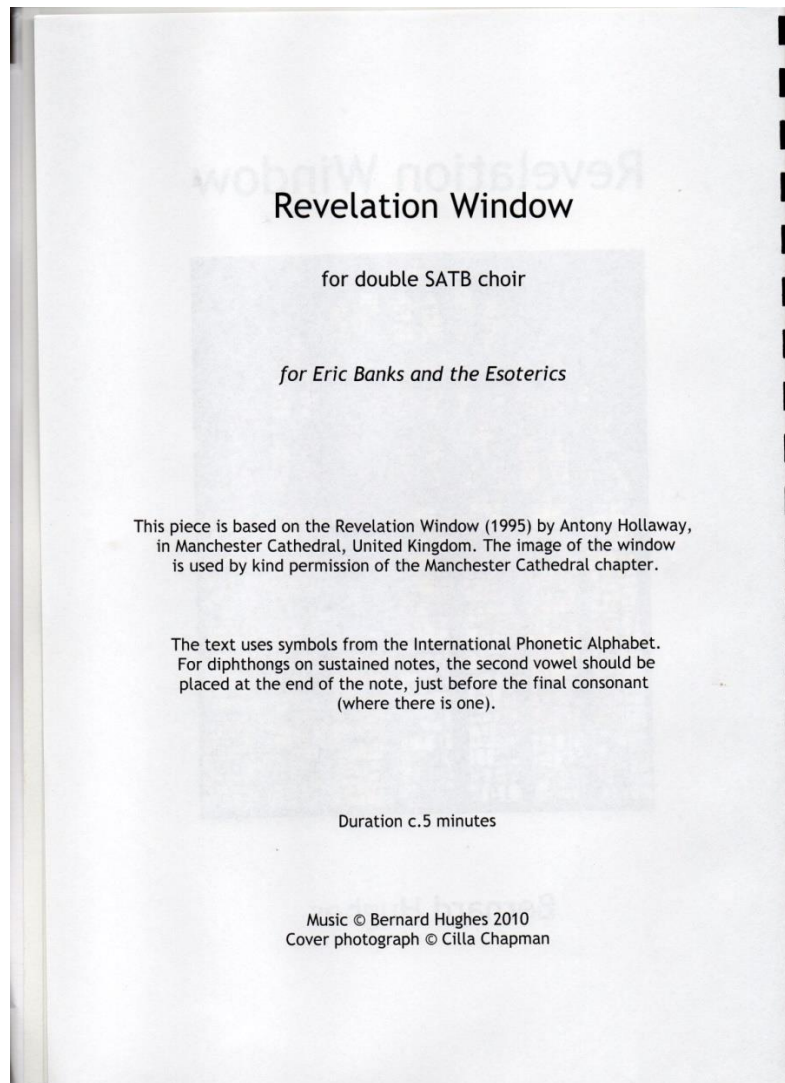
| | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| A3 A3 | B3 B4 | S5 S6 | T5 T6 | A5 A6 | B5 B6 | S7 S8 |
| B1 B2 | S1 S2 | T1 T2 | S3 S4 | T3 T4 | A1 A2 | |
| | | | | | | Conductor |

NB. It is essential for the piece that the choir is placed in this arrangement

General comments

The piece has a theatrical element. The first section (up to page 12) should be delivered as a cross between a public meeting and a stand-up comedy gig, with the choir as both speaker/comedian and audience. Aphorisms are thrown back and forth, initially as isolated thoughts but gradually building into chains of retort and argument. These solo lines must be characterised, performed: suggestions for interpretations are given but singers should try to develop their own. It is important that there should be contrast between the presentation of these statements – the ‘speakers’ are individuals. (Meanwhile the background hum, the audience, is always present but should never obtrude.) As the section progresses the gap between contributions gets shorter until the lines are overlapping, climaxing in the collage which starts at page 15.

In the second half of the piece, groups emerge from the choir and sing together; here there must be a blending of sound, as individuality gives way to group identity. The final section – the Chorale – must be delivered with the minimum of artifice, simply, with very clear diction.



Bernard Hughes, Exerpts from scores, author's own collection.

One and a half truths: a collage of overlaid voices, advancing and receding.

Revelation Window: based on the changing intensity of light playing across and through the painted and stained coloured glass.

Note choir layout and general comments. In addition to the general composition of music for voices, close attention is paid to the specific arrangement and positioning of the individual voices in space.

As with collage grids, composition is premised on a specific distribution and the precise placing of its constituent parts.

Unpublished conversation, Sam Scorer Gallery, 20 October 2016.

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